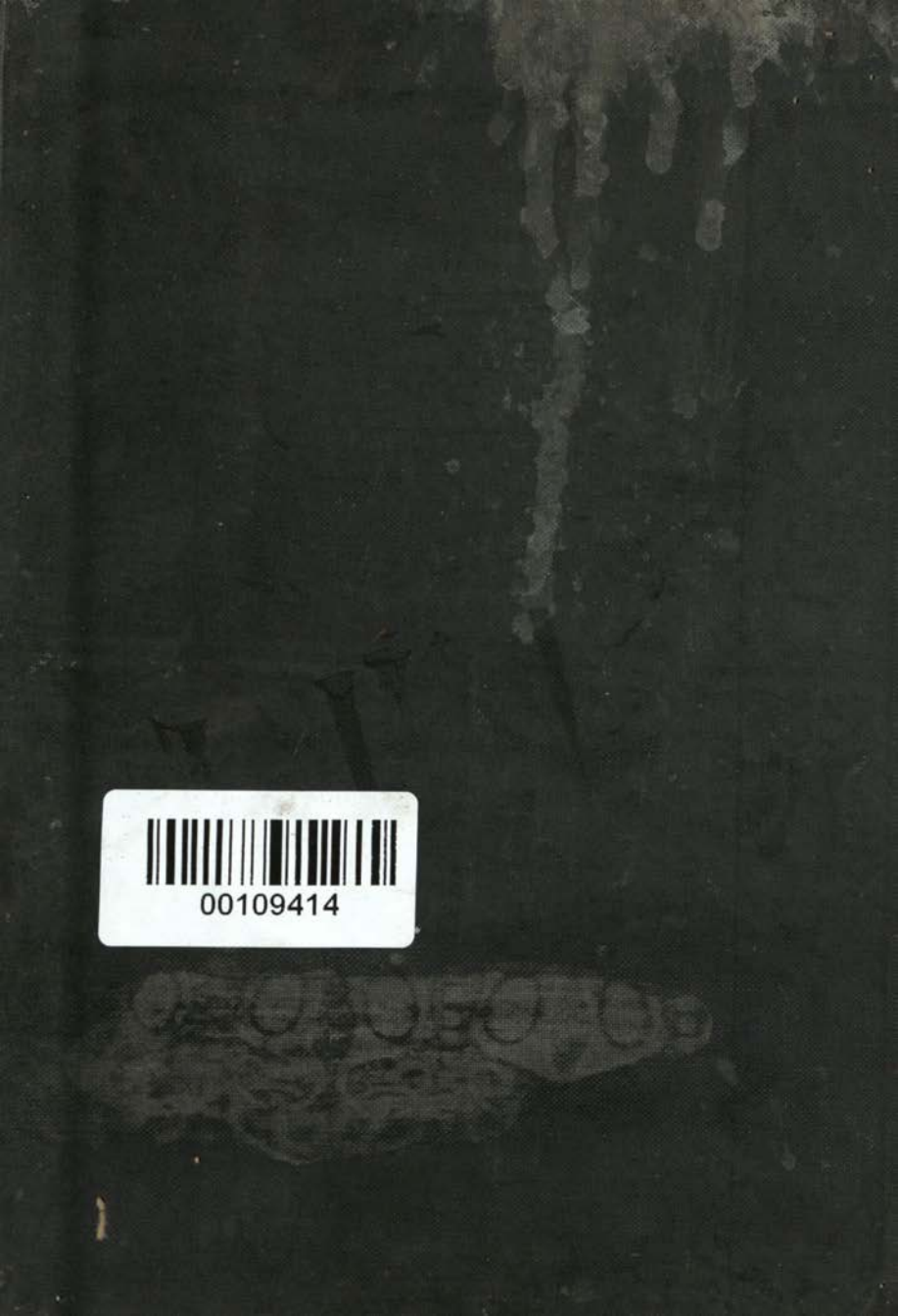
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WORLD'S CHILDREN

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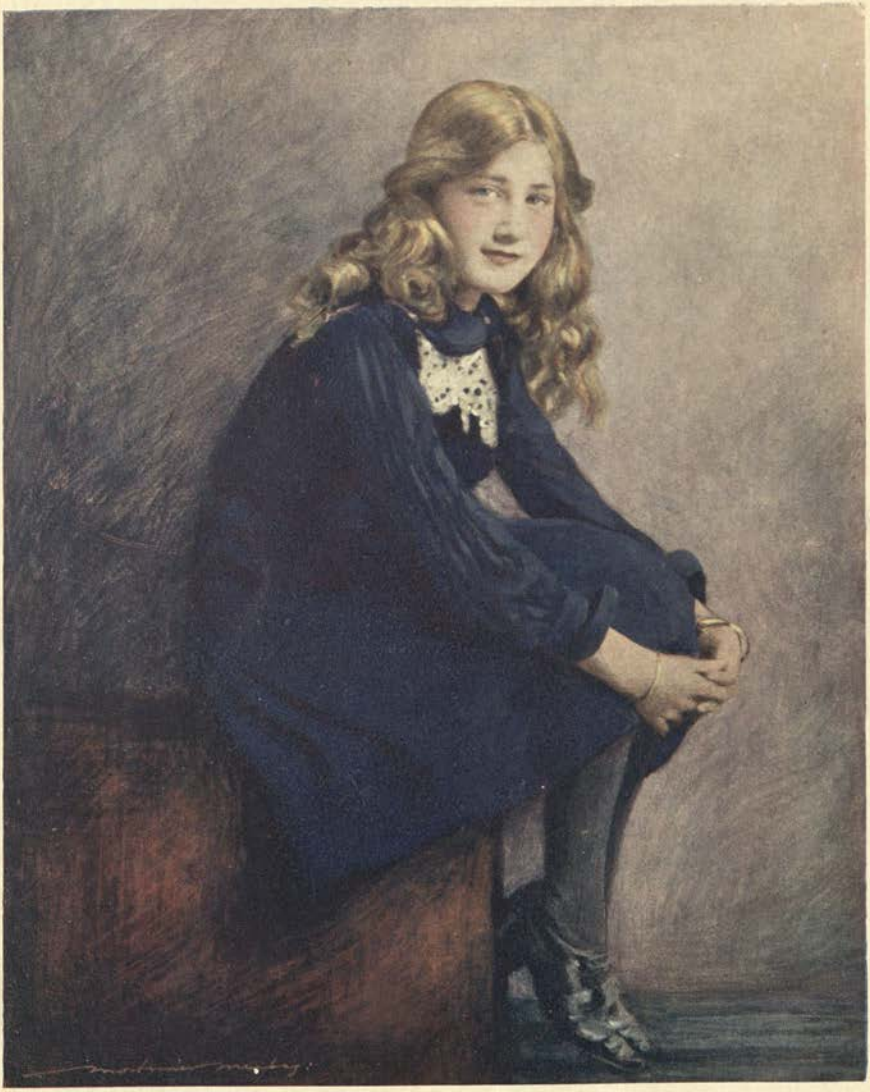

SWEET INNOCENCE

ENGLAND

WORLD'S CHILDREN

BY MORTIMER MENPES

TEXT BY DOROTHY MENPES

PUBLISHED BY ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK·LONDON·W

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ENGLISH CHILDREN

MAY BLOSSOMS

ENGLAND

ENGLISH CHILDREN

ENGLAND being a country of many classes, each living amid its own particular conditions, the children cannot be accurately described in general terms. We must study the classes, separately, in the broad contrasts which they present. For example, there are the London children and the country children. I have lived among the Londoners, painted them, and studied them; and they seem to be the most interesting of all the children that I have come across in my travels. Among London children are the mud-larks, the small scavengers of the Thames, living a queer semi-aquatic life of their own, generally clothed in scanty jackets, sunshine, and mud, wriggling unceasingly in and out of chains and anchors, and curling round about the figureheads of the barges, never for one moment still, slippery and elusive as eels. They are very mischievous

sprites, these children, always appearing where you least expect them, always ferreting about with those terribly keen black eyes of theirs, and frequently swooping down like seagulls upon some hidden treasure embedded in the mud; and their chief anxiety seems to consist in evading the Thames police.

They have a language of their own, as impossible to comprehend as to imitate; it is a special mud-lark patois, and appears to be a mixture of the swear-words of sailors and the slang of landsmen. There are generally fights going on among these urchins for the possession of some treasure; and their constant enemies are the bargees, whom they delight to cheat and annoy by clinging to ropes and chains, thereby getting a ride gratis, as a street-boy does on a Putney 'bus. The fathers of these mud-larks live in old tumbledown sheds on the Thames wharves, and are as handsome a race of men as you could wish to see, often employed as models by artists, who delight in their fine proportions. The boys are in their small way handsome too. They are freckled, with mops of shaggy reddish hair, apparently borrowed from the rust of the barges under which they dive with the greatest ease and facility. When they grow

DOROTHY

ENGLAND

older they do not often become sailors: mud-larks have a wholesome contempt for the sea—it is too tame and uneventful. What they do aspire to is to own a "moke," otherwise a donkey, and drive a coster cart. To possess a "moke" is to have a high social position indeed.

Among the lower classes, London boys and their fathers seem to be frequently at war with one another, and thrashings are daily, almost hourly, occurrences. The "young 'un," as he is commonly called, gets innumerable cuffs and kicks; yet his father has a certain pride in him. He retells the lad's doings and sayings to his pals over their beer with great gusto, and has a rooted belief in his heart of hearts that the "young 'un" knows a thing or two. And so he does: in fact, there are few things that the London "young 'un" doesn't know. Children are somehow or other able to creep in and out of the crevices of London life: they see the working and mechanism and construction of things, and observe many details which their elders never notice.

Coster boys are extremely dignified. Shop boys are even more so. They are splendid salesmen, and at times a precocious boy will take full command of a business. They profoundly distrust both the honesty and the knowledge of every

customer that enters their shop, and keep a sharp look-out upon his actions. The boys who look after old-curiosity shops seem to be quite a type in themselves. They are pale-faced, Jewish-looking, sharp of features, and very quick in their wits. They are very serious and important, and the knowledge of prints and other works of art seems to be inherited. You may come upon one of these boys perched on a ladder reading a book, which you will find to be a novel of the deepest blood-and-thunder dye. When not entirely responsible for the shop he is a Jack-in-the-box, popping up in all kinds of unexpected places. One day I was examining a set of silver buttons, and looking up suddenly I caught the eyes of a child of five closely watching me. "Muvver," he said in a hoarse whisper to a woman at the back of the shop, "she's a touchin' of 'em."

In the background, acting as a sort of parlour watch-dog, one often sees a little girl, dressed in a plaid frock and a dirty white apron, her hair done up in from six to nine plaits. She has a large badly-dressed baby on her knee, a penny novelette balanced somewhere on its head, and a lump of toffee in her mouth. Sometimes you catch a glimpse of really beautiful faces; for London

LILAC SUNBONNET

ENGLAND

girls, when their features are not sharpened by pain, poverty, and hard work, are quite good-looking. Unfortunately, their figures are almost invariably stunted, owing to the heavy burdens which the poor mites are compelled to drag about from the earliest possible ages; but their complexions are fresh, and their features sometimes very fine. They are almost little women at ten years old, knowing no real childhood. Soon after one leaves its mother's arms there is always baby to take care of, to wash and nurse and dress, and Tom's or Bill's or father's clothes to clean and brush, for coster women are exceedingly proud of their men-folk.

Their puny dimensions considered, London girls are possessed of marvellous physical strength, and use it to slap one another liberally right and left. They have a great contempt for what they are pleased to term "side." One day I saw a little girl vigorously chastising another child of her own age. When I asked her why she did it, she answered, "Well, look here, lady: she was holding up her skirt to show her petticoat!"

The children treat all their elders with great familiarity: pertness is their outstanding characterstic. A child of eight or thereabouts is chiefly

occupied with nursing baby and being dignified. She tells everyone that mother says she's not to "mix." One day I was walking along in the rain, and after a time discovered a girl toddling along beside me under my umbrella. We walked some yards together, chatting pleasantly; but suddenly she stopped short and turned round to go back. "Surely you are not going out in the rain," I said. "Yes," she answered in a very decided tone of voice: "Muvver says I ain't got no call to take up with strange women." A girl's greatest joy is in her clothes, especially in her hat. As soon as she can walk she wants a hat like Mary Jane, and magenta has an overpowering attraction for her childish soul. She is intensely jealous of other girls' hats and petticoats; and she is, above all, devoted to dancing. It is quite a sight to see a cluster of girls dancing in the middle of a muddy road, with perfect steps, holding up their funny plaid dresses, with all the professional airs of ballet-dancers. I once saw a dustman suddenly appear on the scene, and whirl a girl round in a perfect waltz.

Between the small girls and the small boys of London there is very little sympathy. They keep more or less aloof from one another; the girls in

PHŒBE

ENGLAND

the background, though really "bossing" the household, and the boys in the more interesting arena of the shop. I have spoken of the curiosity-shop boys; but there are many other classes of shop boys besides these. You see a lad with a clean ruddy face and a blue apron against the background of his father's shop, and he looks well; but you see a poor girl of eight years old, dragging about a great baby, against a background of food and dirt and squalor, and she does not look well at all. Sometimes a girl struggling along grey cheerless streets under the family umbrella, or a pair of maidens carrying their mother's washing-basket, makes a pretty picture; but such scenes are very rare. Still, I admire the Cockney girl. She is splendidly loyal to her mother, devotedly unselfish, plodding on day after day, unthanked and not much loved, through her humdrum life.

The mighty army of small boys who overrun our great cities as carriers is truly charming. You see the lads flashing about the town in their work-a-day dresses, making fascinating touches of colour. London would be dull without them. Anything gives a boy a "uniform"— a white apron, a brass button, a touch of gold. There seems to be a sort of freemasonry between all

the boys who do something—the butcher lads, the poulterer boys, the grocer boys, and the mischievous messenger boys, who will beg for a lift from a cabby on the pretext of being engaged on an important errand, and afterwards put their fingers to their noses and say, "All right, guv'nor: I've taken you in this time." The knowledge of these messenger boys is amazing — they have a profound contempt for you if you cannot locate some obscure street and do not know to a nicety where any special policeman's beat ends;—but their ignorance outside their own particular province is profound. Honest souls, proud to have passed the sixth standard! They love to read the betting news, to smoke the remnant of a cigar, and to ape grown men. Occasionally relations swoop down upon them, calling them by their christian names, or enforcing on Saturdays a weekly wash which is greatly resented.

Then, there are the groups of boys moving about on their hands and knees, future plumbers and gas-fitters, with fat chubby faces, very dirty hands, and complexions grimy with the smoke and dust of London. They seem to spend their early years in this way, getting a cuff now and then when things go wrong, and a halfpenny tossed to them occa-

GOING TO BED

ENGLAND

sionally. There are the stoker boys who go down to the engine-room, whose delight it is to live by the big engines, and would rather be oil-rag boys than anybody else in the world. There are no girls to correspond with these boys. Girls live in their schoolrooms, are often cross, generally interested in reading, very fond of dancing, and much less given to fighting.

How different are the children of the aristocracy, the children that one meets in the Park on a bright summer's morning, prettily dressed, playing games and making friends with one another in a shy little way under the big green trees! Nothing in my opinion is more beautiful than the delicate rose-leaf bloom and the bright eyes of these children. There is a certain dainty haughtiness about this particular class of child that one loves: whether they are sitting with their mother in her victoria or enveloped in muslin in their bassinettes, there is always about them something of what Mr. Kipling calls the arrogance of birth and education. They are accustomed from a very early age to giving orders to their coachmen and nurses, and the instinct of governance is very strong in them. No one is more adorable than the English boy, the ruddy Eton lad, who sits in the sun

on a summer's day when his school is playing cricket, with his hat well back and his legs swinging. The Eton schoolboy is a person to be respected: he has no priggish love of lessons, but is able to do a good day's work when called upon. One sees in him that power which makes England the great nation she is. You cannot but admire the plucky boy who when fighting refuses to give in, no matter how fiercely attacked, and is eventually carried off, vanquished in body but not in spirit. The most beautiful thing in a schoolboy's life is his chum, the one being to whom he confides his jokes, his real opinion of his masters, and his desire to thrash that other fellow. He is a good sort, even though an inquiring turn of mind, which may stand him in good stead in after-life, causes him to break the family thermometer and pull the dining-room clock to pieces, while the chum keeps a watchful eye upon the door. You meet hundreds of such schoolboys, wearing different caps, but otherwise much the same.

There is a great deal in birth and in upbringing. The clothes so simply made, the best that the world can give, the good food, the big houses and gardens to live in—all produce a certain distinction, which one does not see in the poorer or in the

THE DOLL

ENGLAND

COUNTRY GIRL

ENGLAND

middle classes. And just as in the finest soil, when the greatest care and science is brought to bear, the choicest orchids and roses, so among beautiful environments, where nothing is ugly or sordid, where no one is rude or unkind, the most refined and lovely children, with the best manners, are found.

English country children are entirely different from town children. Living all their lives among the things of nature, they do not seem to have the appreciation of them, or the capacity for understanding them, that the London child has. The country child is slower: if you ask him a question on Monday he will give you an answer on Tuesday. A thought seems to take longer to reach his lips than it does to reach those of a London child; yet in their way country children are smart, and up to all kinds of tricks. They have a thorough contempt for what they call the "turrist," whom they look upon as rare game. To send a tourist the wrong way, to leave him in the middle of a field where lurks a bull, or in a piece of swampy ground, is to them fine sport. Country children, for all their picturesque background, have not the beauty of Londoners. Their faces are freckled and red under their large straw hats; their figures are square;

their dresses are ungainly. You can rarely understand the language of a Norfolk, Devonshire, or Cornish country child. It doesn't understand you, and, what is more, it doesn't intend to try.

Every country child can climb, and I have seen a boy swarm up a cow's tail and seat himself on her back. The only time that country children really have an alert expression is when they have just discovered a live animal—a rat, or a toad, or a fish. Country boys know exactly what may, and what must not, be shot at, although they sometimes trespass on the very fringe of the law, and are poachers by nature. Country girls, as a rule, are to be seen at their best when gardening, or when working in their own homes. On Sundays and high days and holidays they look their worst. Occasionally, in Lancashire, in some of the mills where they are more or less sheltered, you notice children with beautiful fair complexions; but they are quite the exception.

SCOTTISH CHILDREN

ALEC

SCOTLAND

SCOTTISH CHILDREN

THE familiar proverb, "Superstitions die hard," is surprisingly applicable to the average Englishman's understanding about the Scots. And very many Englishmen, it must be admitted, are of the average kind—well-fed, well-groomed, smoothly-conventional persons, whose unruffled home-life is spent in villa residences; gentlemen who, with their spouses and their children, consider social refinement—by which they understand material comfort, mellowed by "art furnishings"—the be-all and the end-all of life; substantial, decorous, amiable people these, but not, truth to tell, overburdened with intellectual interest, as Mr Matthew Arnold would have said; ever ready, in placid equanimity, to chaunt the praises of these blest isles with matchless beauty crowned, but never realising how widely distributed and various the matchless beauties are. I speak, to be sure,

of the middle-class Englishmen; but the great majority of Englishmen, it may be said, are middle-class—middle-class in all senses; and especially middling in their knowledge of the world, particularly the portion of it which they believe to be bounded on the south by the Tweed. Almost any part of Scotland is within a twelve-hours journey from London by railroad; yet they have a plentiful lack of knowledge, these thousands of dwellers in the suburbs of the Capital, about the character of their neighbours in the North. If a Scot appears among them they are pretty sure to murmur, one to another, about "bawbees," or "Peebles for pleesure," or the Confession of Faith—forgetting, or never having heard, in the case of the last-mentioned allusion, that the despised theology was formulated not at Edinburgh, but at Westminster. They know that the Scots contribute magnificent regiments to the British Army, and, as may be perceived when pipers appear at any public entertainment, they avow this knowledge with unmeasured generosity; but all their other conceptions of the Northmen are strangely erroneous.

Take the "bawbees" theory. Is it really the case that the Scot is a stingy soul? That there is

some colour for the belief cannot be denied. The ordinary Scot is certainly careful of his cash. But that is a very different thing from saying that he is mean, on which subject I will touch immediately; and there is of the Scot's cautiousness an explanation which is more than sufficient. England has been well-to-do for hundreds of years; but Scotland as a whole was extremely poor until so recently as the middle of the nineteenth century. Generation after almost countless generation of the Scots have had to wring their livings from the most adverse economic conditions. Is it surprising, then, that now, when as a whole those who reside in their native land are only just reaching the state of prosperity which people of similar rank in England have enjoyed for centuries, the Scots attach considerable importance to pounds, shillings, and pence? Surely not: Englishmen would do precisely the same if their antecedents had been such as to make them familiar with poverty and the sordid handicap on character which poverty constitutes. Surely, too, when the Englishman reflects, and realises things which he is prone to talk about without thinking, he will see that the "bawbees" doctrine is in one respect wholly superstitious. In their own homes, high or lowly, the Scots show to strangers

a hospitality which is famous all the world over; when they come to London, to business, or to the professions, or to the arts, in all of which they almost invariably succeed, they are the most generous mortals to be found in the clubs or in society; when they go farther afield and become millionaires —think of the boy from Fife who wrought a great fortune out of steel at Pittsburg—the English-speaking peoples of the whole earth scarcely afford scope enough for their munificence.

In Mechanical Science, in Statesmanship, and in Literature there are similar phenomena before the very eyes of Englishmen, but generally forgotten or unnoticed. It was a Scotsman, James Watt, who, by inventing the steam-engine, gave the greatest impulse to the progress of modern industrial civilisation. Nearly all the seats of the mighty in the Empire are held by Scotsmen. This, which is notorious abroad, is almost as notable at home. The Prime Minister is a Scot, and without a single exception all the statesmen who are endeavouring to acquire the leadership of the Opposition come from Scotland too. Then, Literature: Who are the acknowledged masters of style in the art of expression by means of words? Scots almost to a man. They are supreme in every domain of

Literature. In romance, Sir Walter; in history, Carlyle; in poetry, Burns; in the precision of the essayists, Stevenson; in philosophy, practically every one of the pre-eminent thinkers who have interpreted the human mind to English-speaking readers—all the great masters have been Scots. It may be said that Scotland never produced a Matthew Arnold (who, by the way, was less an Anglican than one of the Chosen People); but did she not? How does the dainty lute of Matthew Arnold compare with the organ of John Ruskin, whose forefathers sold thoroughly honest wine in the ancient and fair city of Perth?

It would indeed be surprising if, having filled the Empire with men who are thus incomparable in all the walks of manly life, Scotland had failed in feminine affairs; but indeed she has not failed. Our complacent suburban worthies are firmly convinced that all they behold in London is indigenous to England, and, when they think of the matter at all, are firmly convinced that Scotswomen have high cheek-bones, sandy hair, and freckles. The sandy hair and the freckles are nonsense. The high cheek-bones are beyond a doubt; but are they features making for ugliness? Who are the reigning beauties in the society of the Capital—the

two or three score of ladies, "divinely tall and most divinely fair," whom the world of rank and fashion ungrudgingly and even joyously acknowledge to be the loveliest of their sex? Almost all of them are Scots or half-Scots! On such a delicate subject we must not publicly name names; but what I have said will, on a careful survey by anyone who is intimate with London society, be admitted, probably with a flush of astonishment, to be absolutely true.

Nor is this race in childhood on its native land lacking in attractiveness. What always strikes me about Scottish children is the intelligent alertness of their expression. They are all well educated, and quite small boys and girls can read and write decently. Many of them are very beautiful. The Tam o' Shanter is in itself a charm: one would be glad to see it even more commonly worn. The lassies run about hatless and happy, with their hair streaming in glorious profusion all about them. In the Inverness region the children's hair is of a curious whitish colour, sticking out all round the head, and their eyes are of a forget-me-not blue. On developing into men and women they often grow plain, I believe; but as children they are beautiful. Where I am penning this chapter it is

a far cry to Loch Awe; yet even here the peculiar fragrance of the peat comes back to my nostrils, a fragrance that is like nothing else in this world. They say, and I daresay with some truth, that a Scots baby is born with the reek of the peat in him or her. He is an imaginative little soul, the Scottish child, sometimes with a belief in fairies, water monsters, and second-sight; and really, after living some time in the far isles of Skye, one is almost persuaded to believe in them oneself.

Every Skye boy knows, when he goes out in the morning to cut the dark peat sods, that the "constabel" will be there to see that he does not take more than his share of fuel, or, if not there, that he will have marked out for him how much his family ought to have. The "constabel" is a person of much authority.

One curious Highland superstition appeals to me as being very beautiful. The crofters, as a class, will not allow their boys to thrash their ponies too hard, because here, under the kindly mists, they firmly believe that the spirits of horses are in direct communication with the spirits in heaven!

One of the maternal superstitions amusingly

indicates the hardy character of the race. Baby's life is sure to be happy and successful if he suffers a good many falls before he is one year old!

For music weird and beautiful, go to the wild Hebrides! In these northern isles you will hear the most musically soft voices singing over work and singing over play from early morning until late at night. They have songs for everything, for joy and for sorrow, for winter and for summer; and I have it on the authority of a well-known writer that the boys of St. Kilda even sing a joyous song on the coming of the swallows.

What a fine time it is for fun and play, and for work too, when the seaweed harvest comes! The perchman hoists a ragged bundle of seaweed on the top of a pole to let all the neighbours know that the "tang" (the local name for the drift seaweed) has come home. Then men, and girls, and boys, and horses, and dogs, with carts and creels, swarm down to the beach, eager-eyed and anxious to assist in removing to the land the great and bounteous gift of the sea; for unless this is done, and very quickly too, the next tide will sweep it all away again. And then the young chieftain comes down from his castle, with all the

pride of birth and ancestry in his mien, wearing his picturesque Highland dress: he has come to inspect and survey and cheer his people at their work, while the skirling piper puts heart and energy into every man, woman, and child. And how splendid the bagpipes sound, there on the seashore, amid the surge of the winds and waves, among the busy workers and the fragrant seaweed! And how picturesque they look, these workers! There are the boys, with hair bleached by the sun until it looks like halos of gold round their heads! Picture an Italian saint, one of Botticelli's, working away among the seaweed in the Highlands, and you have the Scots boy to the life. But as to the hair of the girls! Well, I have heard it described as "bright as the heart of the sun and the fire, yet dark as the heart of the forest." How that can be I do not know; but certain I am that I have seldom seen such glorious colours. And they stand, as I have seen them, for hours by the boats, among the rich brown seaweed, helping father, in their old tartan plaids—plaids faded with the salt air and mists, yet stout and strong, for they are made to meet these storms. They stand athwart the background of the deep blue waters, athwart what

Mr. Kipling calls "the deep-sea meadows," making a picture that gives as strong a combination of colour as could be found anywhere. Here in the Highlands, chastity of conduct, modesty of speech, courtesy to strangers, and respect for the dead are the characteristics of the children, and of the grown-up people too. In these wild scenes, lies and tawdriness cannot live; when the gales in winter let loose the forces of nature, all vice and unhealthiness are swept away. When little lads and lassies who go down to the quays see dead fishermen brought home, they feel that only the real thing can survive these tempests; and it is the same everywhere, when great forces of nature are brought in touch with humanity.

Scotland is a famous place for games and sports of all kinds. Wherever you go, you always find the same sense of fun among the children. They love to climb giant cliffs and scale impracticable places where birds' nests are. You see them gathering seagulls' eggs in the Orkney and Shetland Islands, looking in the distance like some strange blue caterpillars, or large insects, with their short brown breeches, long blue jerseys, and red caps.

Some of their rhymes are quaint and shrewd. Here is an example:—

"'Johnnie Smith, my falla' fine,
Can ye shoe this horse o' mine?'
'Weel I wat, an' that I can
Just as weel as ony man.

"'Pit a bittie on a tae,
Gar's a horse spiel a brae;
Pit a bittie on a heel,
Gar's a horse trot richt weel.'"

IRISH CHILDREN

MOLLY

IRELAND

IRISH CHILDREN

DEAR dirty Irish children, how handsome they are and how witty! growing up from out of their native wretchedness like blue anemones. Their one and only friend is the family pig, who plays with them in the mud outside their miserable hovels, shares with them their scanty meals, sleeps with the entire family in one barn or hut, under the same ancient blanket, and forms their staple food and comfort after he is dead, in the shape of pickled pork and bacon. A great boon and blessing is this noble animal to the children of Erin! Yet, in spite of their dirt and their rags, in spite of grey skies, bare legs, and gnawing hunger, Irish children thrive and are to a certain extent happy—that is to say, as far as the Irish nature can be happy, for, with all their capacity for fun and sparkling wit, a strain of gentle melancholy invariably underlies the

brightest smile. Irish children are the poorest and most unfortunate children in the world; yet they are possessed of a grand imagination, which gilds their sordid lives and throws a halo over the most ordinary everyday objects.

Is not the very mud outside their houses peopled with laughing, mischievous elves who play endless pranks as they dart hither and thither, now teasing the lazy pig, now pulling the children's hair, jumping, laughing, singing everywhere? What fun it is to watch the fairy folk hopping in and out of the pot the mother is stirring, trying to steal a morsel of potato, blowing the steam into fairy circles, pulling at the woman's dress or clustering round her spoon! The little red-capped goblins run wild when they reach the country; they swarm on every flower and blade of grass, riding gaily on butterflies' backs and annoying the lazy grasshoppers—happy-go-lucky little people, whom no one can harm, and whom all children love. What do Irish children care about their plain saffron-hued dresses, which are never changed from year's end to year's end? How little they heed the hungry feeling inside them at bedtime, so long as they can cluster round some ancient

fisherman on a winter's evening, especially on Holy Eve, and listen while he tells of ghost and fairy legends, horrible tales of disobedient children who were pinched to death, of beautiful girls who pined away and died on hearing fairy music, and the thousands of bold bad men killed by fairy darts! They listen to these wondrous stories to the accompaniment of the creaking boats. And there are no more enthusiastic listeners than Irish children. They are full of imagination. They will describe to you, and sometimes point out, the quaintest things in everyday life which they really seem to see, such as fairy folk walking about on the ceilings of their homes, valiantly bestriding butterflies in the country, wrestling with bees, or peering inquisitively into bluebells and buttercups, — scenes which if described by an English child would cause that small person to be bundled off to bed, and pronounced as sickening for scarlet fever. Irish children are very much in earnest concerning their ghosts and goblins, just as much in earnest as the little Welsh folk with regard to their dragons, for every Welsh child has a favourite dragon of his very own, in whose existence he implicitly believes, who is far more of a joy

to him than any ordinary doll could possibly be.

Irish mothers and fathers never laugh at their children's fancies. Indeed, they are little less credulous themselves. All of them in their childhood have believed in the fairy gold, and all of them have a lurking affection for the supernatural, so much so that they will never speak carelessly of these people, for a fairy's rage when once roused is truly terrible. I should think one could safely say that there is scarcely an Irishman in Ireland at the present day, no matter how modernised in his ideas he may be, who is not superstitious, would sit down comfortably thirteen at a table, cross knives, or enter a cemetery at night. In fact, half the time of these most delightful people seems to me to be more or less spent in avoiding some ladder or pillar-box or white horse, and the thousand and one things that are supposed to bring ill-luck. But it seems that everyone must have drawbacks; and Irish children, charming though they be, are, I am sad to say, often found guilty of a somewhat grave fault, in that they rarely by any chance tell the truth. An Irish child's manner of lying is not quite the same as that of other children, being more pictur-

esque and fantastic; nevertheless, these children tell extraordinary lies from their earliest cradle days; to do so is as natural to them as to breathe the air; in fact, there is probably not one single child of the lower classes in Ireland at the present day who does not lie, throw stones, and become begrimed,—all with a cheerfulness and an angelic sweetness quite irresistible.

Still, the children, with all their lies and dirt, are extremely entertaining. An Irish child is born to be witty and amusing: the smallest dirty cherub will never miss the opportunity of telling you a funny story, and never does he allow truth to interfere with the humour of it.

The clothing of these delightful children, which is almost invariably composed of a saffron-coloured material, seems to be more or less designed in sympathy with dirt, quite an inspiration in economy, which convincingly proves to me the superiority of the Irish over the Bretons, whom hitherto I had considered quite the dirtiest people on this earth. The Chinese are very formidable rivals to the Irish; but both Chinese and Bretons wear dark blues and bottle greens, colours which must conceal the dirt, for their dresses are handed down from generation to generation, unwashed

and unchanged. They have never reached the perfection of saffron, which is essentially Irish.

Then, again, in one other point the Irish excel. They are adepts in the art of saving labour. Why mend the children's clothes while yet the garments are sufficiently tough to keep on their backs unaided? Only by a miracle, you say? What matter? The fragments still cling there, and that, after all, is the main thing.

CANADIAN CHILDREN

TRIXY

CANADA

CANADIAN CHILDREN

ALTHOUGH born in a land where the sunshine and the frost are alike extreme, the Canadian baby is to be envied. He is vigorous, strong, sound in wind and limb. A splendid race of British subjects is springing up from the Canadian soil! Nevertheless, while baby Canadian is quite small, he is somewhat *de trop* in the household. His mother is busy always, especially in summer and during the fall, when there are mowers or threshers to be fed; and although a baby is very charming in theory, his father is not over-pleased to be kept awake at night, when resting from a hard day's work, by his son's shrieks while cutting teeth. But as his mother is bustling about the kitchen, too busy to notice him, baby soon gives up shrieking as a waste of time, and when winter comes takes to watching his breath freeze on the window-pane. It is no surprise to him when thus occupied

to turn round and find his milk frozen in the bottle.

The life of a Canadian baby would be full of incident to his little English *confrère*, who would be surprised, for instance, on waking up in the morning to find seven or eight strange people breakfasting with the family. But to the Canadian baby this is quite an everyday occurrence. He is brought up in a hospitable atmosphere; the house door is left unlocked at night, and sometimes a belated traveller takes refuge inside. Neither does the sight of a frostbitten man having his legs plunged into icy water move a Canadian child to wonder.

As baby grows older he begins to make himself useful—he would feel so terribly in the way otherwise. He does not look upon work as a grievance, but takes to it as a duck to water; he finds that work is the main object of everyone's existence in Canada—without it life would be flat and spiritless indeed. A boy of seven cleans all the boots of the family every morning before school, while his sister scrubs the floor and thinks nothing of it. In this way boys and girls find themselves independent, for, as hands are always wanted, a child can run away from his home at

THE FIRST WALK

CANADA

any time and earn his own living. The Canadian boy is taught to cook and scrub and do anything in domestic service; menial work is considered no disgrace, and even an earl's son must clean his own boots,—in fact, it is only the third-class people who cannot work for themselves.

A boy doesn't know what life is, does not feel a really good, healthy appetite, until he goes out to the prairies, where the air blows straight from the North Pole, keen and exhilarating. It is a hard, healthy life for a boy. There is so much that he can do. First, there is the lambing season; but that is a period of comparatively easy weeks. Late in the summer is the busiest time. Then boys and girls breakfast at half-past four, and work all day in the fields, following the reapers-and-binders and propping up the sheaves as they are thrown out of the machines. They take their dinners to the field, and sometimes their tea. Soon afterwards comes the hard work of the fall, when everything that is likely to be wanted during the winter has to be brought into the house. Every Canadian boy has a bright future if he only works thoroughly. Any child may aspire to become a landowner, and bequeath his name to a town, or take an active part in

the government of his country. Everyone has the same chance of success—everyone is equal. Education is cheap, and a boy, by working out his fees during vacation, can study at a University.

What are the surroundings of a Canadian child? In the winter, a broad white world with blue shadows; in summer, a prairie carpeted with wild-flowers of the most beautiful colours. How well he knows a prairie fire, when the sky becomes lurid and the atmosphere stifling, and he has to rush out and help to form a guard—to plough up the ground around the homestead!

Perhaps no country was ever so perfectly adapted to the enjoyment and well-being of children as Canada. In the winter there are skating, tobogganing, and snowball tournaments; in the summer, boating, fishing, hunting, and lacrosse. Children learn to live out of doors in all weathers, and more than half their time is spent in the open air. Sport to young Canadians, as to all young Britons at home or beyond the seas, amounts to a passion; and having adopted most of our games, they play them with vigour and skill. But tobogganing is, perhaps, the greatest joy of all, and really there is nothing quite like it. The air is so splendid and invigorating; and the

excitement of flying down one hill at breakneck speed and up another, the bumps and upsets, the rush, the shouting and screaming, make most other sports tame compared with it.

Snow-shoes are, of course, absolutely necessary, and every Canadian possesses a pair, decorated, according to his or her taste, with many-coloured woollen balls and tassels.

The most delightful characteristic of Canadian children is their healthiness. They seem one and all to inherit evenly balanced minds, good-natured temperaments, and sound, well-developed bodies. Very early in life they learn to wage war with the elements, to build sledges and canoes; and even the smallest children are wonderfully dexterous in the fashioning of playthings out of snow and ice.

AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN

AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN

A CHILD brought up in the Australian bush—what a background is his! Flowers, ferns, grasses, weeds, and rushes run riot on every side; thistles grow to a gigantic size; and the blue gum-trees are massive. They are brave children, these Australians, hardened to every weather. They are allowed to run about in the sun in their bright dresses, happy and unrestrained.

An Australian bush child gains health without ceremony; he scrambles from the bath to the sand heap, and wears nothing that can spoil. If a child wants to get down in the dust and sand and mud, he can; and mud and puddles have a proverbially great attraction for children all the world over. Australian children are allowed to gratify their tastes in this direction. What an untold joy it is to splash about in mud over one's ankles, without anybody to say "Don't" or "Take care";

to sit in the dust and sand if you feel inclined, and fill your pockets with pieces of broken bottles, old tins, and all the treasure-trove so dear to childish minds! If an Australian child tumbles down and hurts himself, as you may be sure he does twenty times a day, he does not run and cry to his mother: he nurses his wounds in private, and bears his pain stoically and proudly: it would be an untold disgrace to cry. No doubt he counts his scars, and shows them triumphantly to his friends afterwards. All children love to do that. I remember once myself biting my finger over a healing cut, so that it should leave a scar. Australian boys know all about snakes, how to send the pigs after them to kill them and eat them; how to guard against snake-bites; how, when stung by a venomous reptile, to tie a string tightly round the bite and promptly cut off a slice of flesh,—and there are not many Australian boys born in the bush who would not have the pluck to do it. Every child carries about with him a sharp knife and a piece of string: these are just as much parts of his wardrobe as a pocket-handkerchief and a pair of gloves would be to an English boy. He knows how to fell a gum-tree—how to light a fire at the roots, and how to chop the tree down. It is a

grand free life for a boy, the Australian bush life: the climate is exhilarating, and he soon grows strong and healthy. He gets up at daybreak, takes his breakfast, saddles and mounts his horse, and gallops away at an hour when boys in England have not thought of rising. The squatter's son is in the saddle all day long, and learns his business in all its branches thoroughly. He goes hunting with his father, a rough-looking person, with clothes bepatched in cloth of every shade. He waits every bit as anxiously as his parents for the rains, when the dried grass will be changed to green, and the flowers blossom out within a few nights.

A young Colonial maps out his own calling in life. He is extremely independent and self-opinionated, troubling himself very little about the wishes of other people: indeed, for his parents to set their hearts on one career is sometimes sufficient to make him decide on another. Pushing, industrious, and sharp-witted, he is bound to get on in life. It is the ambition of most boys to become wealthy farmers, to possess orchards, poultry-yards and piggeries, many horses and many dogs. He is, on the whole, a person to be admired and respected.

The Australian girl is scarcely so attractive a

figure as her brother. Before the English girl would have outgrown childish delights, she is a woman in miniature, self-conscious, self-confident, not easily abashed, with eyes that have long ceased to look out upon the world in wonder. Dressed in a short skirt and with a plait down her back, she imitates her elders, flirts, falls in love, and sometimes reads and writes funny love-letters in all seriousness. This is very innocent and youthful in its way; but it is precocious. The baby girl has her say as to what she learns, where she goes, and what she wears. In fact, she brings herself up quite after her own lights, and in the way she thinks fit. She grows into womanhood strong and healthy, and frequently good-looking, with a complexion of softest pink and white, which remains with her until she is almost an old woman.

AMERICAN CHILDREN

WITH NURSE

AMERICA

AMERICAN CHILDREN

WHEN one meets American children at hotels or on steamboats, one is inclined to form rather an unfavourable opinion of them. They seem rough, boisterous, and self-opinionated; they have much assurance; they attract a great deal of attention, expressing their opinions strongly and loudly. Their mothers seem to be unkindly kind to them: they sacrifice everything to the children, especially to the boys. All the clever sayings and doings of these small persons are related and enlarged upon, until they are made to consider themselves people of some importance in the world. The eccentricities are sometimes very amusing, it is true; but the maternal appreciation must surely be detrimental.

All this is quite a superficial opinion, the idea that one forms of American children at first sight. Look more deeply into their natures, associate with one or two of them for a few days; and

you will receive a very different impression. They are in reality every whit as well brought up as English children; and they have a certain vivacity of mind, a quiet determination and self-control, that one cannot help admiring. Parents take great pains to develop individuality in their children, and to impress upon their minds a feeling of responsibility, — the feeling that everything that they do in the world, the most casual thought or action, may be of consequence, and that a child, no matter how humble, has a chance of some day taking part in furthering the interests of the great Republic. American parents live their lives over again in those of their children, and their hopes and aspirations are as boundless as their ambitions for them. Work is the principal thing in America: they don't want loafers, for whom there is no place. Even in the playground, the lazy boy is looked down upon; and a young man starting his career, even though he be the son of a millionaire, must earn his own living. One cannot but admit that there is a great deal of boasting among the children: in fact, half a boy's spare time is spent in an elaborate description of what he has done in the playground in the way of hammering other boys; and once on the subject of sport, they are quite

SUNSET

PURITAN

hopeless. For instance, a child of seven will think nothing of explaining how he cleared eighteen feet in a running jump. The fact is that their ideas are so grand and out of proportion to their powers that they step out yards instead of feet. In America there is no real child-life in the sense that we know it here. Children become old men before they are young. Toys do not rouse in them the enthusiasm that they do among English children, and I doubt if poor old Punch and Judy would raise a smile. They prefer to invent their own playthings. You may possibly find a boy of eight who has just discovered a wonderful new method of picking up marbles with very little trouble to himself. The American lad likes to have models of warships and engines, and he is always striving to invent a profitable penny toy. The general craving for knowledge among children is extraordinary. Boys are prone to study, to gain knowledge, and to use it in all sorts of ways. At school, boys will take infinite pains and much pleasure in editing a newspaper, in gathering together a little staff, and trying to "run" it on the lines of some great daily paper, always thinking out new means of producing and illustrating it at a minimum cost; or they try to get

a little money by gathering a few books together and forming a circulating library. American boys are very gallant. They treat the girls well. If a boy was heard to say anything rude or ungenerous to a girl or about a girl, even though she were his own sister, he would not soon hear the last of it. Curiously enough, nothing pleases an American boy so much as to be "led around" by a girl and to be made to do things. He loves to think that he is being bullied, and always allows the girl to believe she is "running" everything. They take a pride in giving way, these American boys: it seems to them to be the manly thing to do. And this characteristic, I notice, follows them through life: the women are always well treated. On the other hand, the girl is most scathing and ruthless in her remarks to the boys about her. She treats them with apparent scorn, although she may laud them to the skies in private. They are sharp-witted, these girls: even a child knows the value of her own conversational powers. They love to have something novel to talk about, a funny story or a new anecdote; and they are most appreciative listeners.

THE SALMON GOWN

PURITAN

FRENCH CHILDREN

PHILLIS

FRANCE

FRENCH CHILDREN

THERE are perhaps no more obedient children in all Europe than the children of France. A French child never dreams of questioning a command: it does what it is told, and apparently thinks just what it is made to think: it is a cipher in mamma's or papa's hands, a perfect puppet, with very little individuality away from the white cloud of its bonne's cap or the silken frou-frou of its mother's gown. It is brought into the drawing-room on festive occasions, well dressed and washed and combed, just to make its graceful bow and one polite speech and then retire. It is not made a fuss of in any way: friends are not bored by its quaint tricks, or by its witty sayings retailed by the fond mamma. On the contrary, the Parisian baby is taught to consider itself a very humble person indeed, unworthy of consideration, and quite uninteresting

to other people. In France it is a woman's duty to please, and children feel the importance of this at a very early age. All French children are anxious to create a good impression wherever they go, to look well and be thought well of; and for this reason they are almost ideally good and well-behaved. Children playing and skipping on the Boulevards, at fancy-dress balls, at dancing lessons, are quite aware that they are regarded with many pairs of approving eyes; and a certain air of coquetry pervades their smallest actions. They would not be happy unless admired. No Parisian child will fly into a rage in public: to frown and stamp would spoil her appearance and ruffle her dignity. She would be terribly upset if, when walking on the Boulevards, her dress were to become slightly soiled or a button were lost from her shoe: she would hurry her nurse home by short cuts and unfrequented paths, lest perchance they should suffer the humiliation of meeting an aristocratic acquaintance. And even at Trouville, on the sands, where one would expect children to run wild, more or less forgetful of their clothes, you will see girls, and even boys, setting their own and one another's cravats and sashes, smoothing rebellious curls, and straightening dainty sun-

AT THE FAIR

FRANCE

bonnets, which in the process of erecting a monstrous sand-castle have become slightly awry, with much solemnity and anxiety. There is a great deal of form and ceremony even in the everyday games and conversation of these quaint little people. Children are formally introduced to one another; and they have the strictest code of rules and etiquette, to violate which means censure and expulsion from good society. I once saw a girl go up to another and ask very prettily if she might play with "mademoiselle." The small autocrat looked the intruder sharply over from top to toe, and, suddenly observing one white sock drooping in woebegone fashion over the tiny kid shoe, turned her head and politely, but chillingly, declined the honour.

French boys and French girls seem to be without much sympathy with one another. A girl's interest is in dolls and in her "première communion," and her ambition is to become a competent housewife and mother; while a boy's interest is centred in books and soldiers, and his great ambition is to follow in the footsteps of his father. Moreover, a French mother deems it prudent that the boys of one family should associate as little as possible with the girls of another. Early attachments might become inconvenient.

The principal part of a girl's training seems to consist in fitting her to become a wife. She is instructed in all those arts which will please a husband: in fact, her whole life seems to be devoted to this purpose. Any superfluous intelligence and tendency to book-learning is crushed in her, lest she should develop into that terrible atrocity a blue-stocking, and thereby lose her chance of matrimony. She is hurried from one class to another, and crammed with all kinds of superficial knowledge: she learns to play a little, sing a little, recite a little, and to sew, and wash, and cook, and keep accounts in an orderly manner. Piety, ignorance, innocence, and all the virtues are encouraged in her, until finally the complete young lady is produced and safely launched upon the world.

Parisian children are clever mimics of their mothers and fathers, precocious, gay, but not entirely happy,—vain, affected, polished, mature. Their training is a pious one—in that they are taken to church regularly in their best clothes, and made to comport themselves there in the best possible manner. Yet these little ones know nothing of the higher and nobler virtues. They will tell small fibs and large ones in the glibbest

ON THE BEACH AT TROUVILLE

FRANCE

and most graceful way possible, deceiving their mothers and fathers. In this, I think, all French children are alike. They are not expected to tell the truth: frankness is not demanded of them. They are carefully and regularly guarded; but if the watch over them is relaxed for a moment, they are expected to, and they do, deceive. I never realised this more fully than when I was boarding at a convent in France. We were rarely left for a moment by day or by night, and one could not help feeling the effects of such constant attention and religious routine; but directly the attention was withdrawn and the routine relaxed, the change was extraordinary. Among the French girls plots sprang up as quickly as mushrooms on a summer's night, and the wildest and most impossible schemes for enjoyment, some of which shocked and surprised me not a little, were confided to my ear by the pattern girls of the establishment. At the same time, I must admit that a girl who has been brought up in a convent learns certain things and acquires certain habits which in her after-life she can never forget. For instance, a convent-bred girl reveres her elders: she knows how to give up a chair, to open a door, to hand a cup of tea, and above all to bow with a grace that no ordinary

dancing-master can imitate: in a word, she learns good manners. That is the keynote of French life. Whether in town or in country, whether young or old, Parisian or bourgeoise, Norman or Breton, the French are all well-mannered; and it is undoubtedly this very quality, their graciousness and anxiety to please, that makes travelling in France so easy and enjoyable, and Paris such an ideal city to live in.

There is no "enfant terrible" in France. Boys allow themselves to be controlled more or less by their mothers, consulting their wishes and obeying to the letter. No romantic and daring idea ever forms itself in a French boy's head to run away to sea, to descend from his bedroom by the rain-pipe, or anything of that kind; one never sees him with torn knickerbockers, scratched legs, or a dirty face; he doesn't risk his life twenty times a day with the same reckless joy that a British boy does, and on the whole he is not so brave or so plucky. He is shut up in a school like a barrack, dressed in a shapeless uniform; knowledge is crammed into his unwilling head all day; he has no games, no football, scarcely any holidays, and grows up sallow, unmuscular, mischievous, but extremely clever. If he can't hold his own with a

IN THE TUILERIES GARDENS

FRANCE

small Britisher in the playground, he certainly makes up for it in the schoolroom. Of course, in military schools things are quite reversed. There, drill and exercise are the order of the day. Every boy must go through them; and after serving his time in the army he is turned out quite a different creature, one who is to be respected.

The life of a French peasant child and the life of a Parisian child are widely different. Some characteristics they have in common; but on the whole they are dissimilar. The peasant is to my mind the more natural and childlike. The peasantry constitute the bulwark, the mainstay, and the strength of the nation.

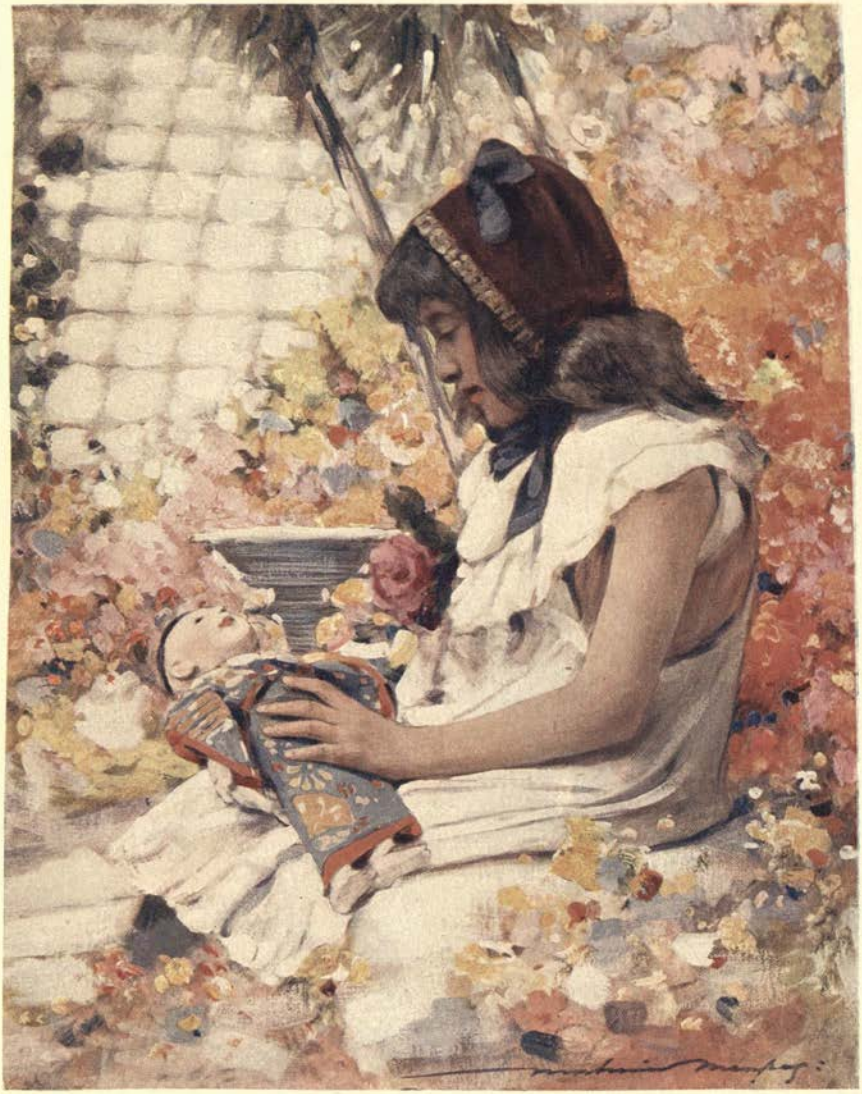
A Parisian baby grows up amid brightness and gaiety; a peasant baby amid plodding, healthy industry. For the really characteristic French children one should search not in salons and boulevards, but in farms and fields and gardens. And one comes across children everywhere in France. You see them sitting outside their homes on summer evenings with little "bowls of bouillon"; you see them in the early morning, red-capped and rosy-cheeked, trudging along to school, each with a large satchel slung over his or her back. You see little dots in blue, with big sabots, making hay; you

stumble over bundles which turn out to be babies tightly swathed in clothes, and are amazed to see a face appear and a pair of arms stretched out to reach a bottle of cider, which in this extraordinary country serves as a substitute for milk. What a fuss is made about this person when he comes into the world! One would imagine that the stars had fallen, or that war was declared at least, by the clatter of tongues, the ringing of bells, the showering of presents, and the documents to be signed and oaths to be sworn to greet his arrival. Although he has to subside modestly out of notice a little later, he can't slip on to the stage of life in an ignominious manner. Everybody knows about him and everybody is concerned, and sometimes the mayor of the village comes round to inspect him personally. His appearance, name, and prospective occupation are considered sufficiently important to be recorded and catalogued in a large musty volume. After all, these precautions are not unnecessary; because if a mistake were made in the smallest detail, master baby would find himself in after-life unable to be christened, or married, or buried, and that would be inconvenient.

A christening in Paris is quite a small affair—salt is sprinkled on baby's tongue and water on his

IN THE CONSERVATORY

FRANCE



forehead, and that is all;—but in the country there are feasts, and games, and dancing, and the nurse is the heroine of the hour. Before a child is baptised no one ever asks its sex: it is not looked upon as a child at all, but merely as an animal.

Peasant children are superstitious, and some of their beliefs are quaint. Ghosts are implicitly believed in; certain herbs are cultivated for their power of curing headaches, toothaches, and colds; while a particular kind of prayer and gesture is supposed to frighten the evil spirits. The children are narrow-minded. They know all about everything that is going on in their own immediate neighbourhood; but of the outer world they are wholly ignorant. "Paris" and perhaps "England" are the most far-away names that ever reach their ears. French children are very well-behaved; they are rarely allowed to eat with their elders at table; they are never seen unless asked for; and, even among the highest in the land, the greatest crime a child or even a grown-up person can commit is to leave anything on his plate. Willy nilly, he must swallow everything, gristle and all, or be considered ill-bred.

All children are dressed in white and blue, the

colours of the Virgin Mary, under whose special protection they are; one girl I knew never wore a thread of any other colour until she was twenty-one.

On the whole, I have always found French children, though somewhat unchildlike, delightful little people, easy to live with and charming to behold.

UNDER GRANNIE'S EYE

BRITTANY

BRETON CHILDREN

MARIE-JEANNE'S BEST CLOTHES

BRITTANY

BRETON CHILDREN

BRETON children are pious, superstitious, stolid and strong, patriotic and very thorough. The greatest fault they can commit in the eyes of their parents is to be wasteful—to tear their garments, or to leave food on their plates.

The girls are intellectual and interesting. They are the mainstays of the family, and I have known a child of ten undertake to superintend both the household and the farm work of her home. The boys are more or less stupid, handsome, bronze-faced, country louts.

How a Breton baby manages to grow up into maturity has always been a marvel to me. He spends his days in a low-roofed farm, inhabited also by the pigs, and enlivened by an occasional visit from a cow; he sleeps in a carved wooden cradle, while his person is wrapped up in broadcloth and flannel, and covered, even in the hottest weather,

with piles and piles of eider-down and rugs, so that to find him is a matter of no little difficulty; sometimes one may be quite near him without having the slightest idea that he is there.

The creature never seems to cry; he receives but scant attention from early morning until late at night; and the utmost consideration that he can expect from his family is an occasional rocking of the cradle. Food, I believe, is administered to babies in Brittany; but I have never seen the process. As time goes on the smothering method of upbringing is continued, and that on a larger scale. Children as well as grown-up persons sleep in beds let into the wall, which are quite a journey to mount, and are covered with heaps of eider-down. Breton babies, I imagine, must suffer frightfully from nightmare. In the daytime both boys and girls are dressed in the thickest of broadcloth. Girls wear multitudinous petticoats, and great padded rolls round the waist, two cloth bodices, and an elaborately crimped white collar, edged with lace, sticking out far over the shoulders, which can only be washed and got up by a Breton born; also several gold chains with lockets and charms suspended round their necks, for the Bretons are extremely

OUT OF MISCHIEF

BRITTANY

superstitious. But most picturesque of all is the "coif," or cap, which is made of real old lace, stiffly starched, and formed into great loops on either side of the head: this is placed over a small inner cap, wound round and round with a brightly coloured ribbon, and always taken off during household work.

A Breton girl's hair is always brushed tightly back and coiled underneath: only a very badly brought-up woman would show a single strand of hair beneath her cap.

No one in Brittany wears any other foot-gear than sabots. Splendid things they are, too, admirably adapted to the country, and, strangely enough, of perfect fit. The most tender feet after a time become comfortable in sabots, worn with a soft inner sock of leather and wool.

Almost every Breton girl, no matter how poor her parents may be, has put carefully by for her in an old oak chest a most beautiful and elaborate costume, generally of dark blue, thickly embroidered, and decorated with gold tinsel, with scarcely a square inch of plain cloth to be seen; also a real lace cap and collar, a gorgeous silk apron, a broad velvet ribbon with long ends, and a silver cross for the neck. These things have been handed

down from generation to generation, the fashions never changing during hundreds of years; and such a desecration as a stain or a rent caused by one of the family while wearing them is an unheard-of occurrence. A rich generation occasionally adds a row of embroidery or a double edging of lace, and the dresses increase in value with increasing years. Such costly garments are, of course, worn only at pardons and on Sundays. Girls in Brittany are taught at a very early age the art of cookery. They are shown how to make crêpes, which are the most delightful sort of pancakes you can imagine, and only to be procured in Brittany; and how to make pottage and bouillon. They crimp their own collars—a very difficult process, only to be accomplished with innumerable straws, and while the linen is wet. One finds children everywhere in Brittany, as indeed one does in most countries. One sees them playing about among the dunghills on the uneven ground outside their fathers' granite-built houses; the boys in blouses, light-haired and blue-eyed, with oval, aquiline faces. Inside the dwelling-place everything is polished to the uttermost—massive chestnut tables, wardrobes, beds, brass pans, and blue and white china; great brown hams and round bladders of lard

HARD UP

BRITTANY

hang from the ceiling; here one sees girls in blue petticoats and white caps flitting about, helping their mothers to prepare the midday meal, to make the galettes, and to skim the milk. One sees them in the dim interiors, climbing wrecks of carved stairs—dirty little gamins, rolling and tumbling where stately nobles trod in the centuries gone by. The children trot about the streets bareheaded, eating cherries, but sheltered from the sun by the tall houses, which almost meet together overhead. Girls go gathering bilberries, with their mugs in their hands, by the tinkling becks, while the butterflies hover round their heads and the sun smiles broadly on them. Old-world children, in tight white skull-caps, not showing a curl of their baby hair, play gravely in the gutter, with long petticoats flapping about their heels, and entirely covering their fat legs; while just within-doors mothers sit at their spinning-wheels and keep watch. You see children in the market-places, where all sorts of tempting wares are sold, playing roulette for gingerbread and macaroons. You see them on Sundays, fresh and clean and fair, emerging from dark, unhealthy dwelling-places on their way to church, to prostrate themselves before some

gaudy shrine, and send up their simple souls in prayer to the Mother of God, clasping a rosary between their fingers; and afterwards, perhaps, to buy a candle larger than themselves, and walk off with it triumphantly to the shrine of their particular patron-saint. It is pretty to see them on a summer's day, while romping in the fields, suddenly stop before some wayside stone or cross, bow their fair heads, and reverently murmur an Ave Maria,—looking like cherubs, all pink and white and golden-haired. Life is easy in Brittany, and children are idolised as precious gifts from God.

At the fisheries you see them waiting on the shore to lend a hand at packing the shellfish; toys are made out of the oyster-shells and the big bones of fish.

The children love to dance at the pardons—to join in that stately, solemn gavotte, the national dance of Brittany. They will dance at all times and in all weathers,—on a hot dusty road in midsummer, amid rain and hail under the trees, all the way home for miles over hill and dale, ploughed fields, and ditches, singing as they go,—anywhere and everywhere.

Brittany is a land of fêtes and processions, gaudy

AT CONCARNEAU

BRITTANY

tinsel and banners: there are fêtes of all kinds, joyous, religious, and sad, and the children figure greatly in them. Dressed in white, they sprinkle rose-leaves before a gorgeously-dressed priest who carries the host through the streets, above a sea of lowered white-capped heads. When the river is blessed, children form a procession, singing as they go. Then, one day you will see a rough cottage door hung with black; a small wooden coffin, painted white, resting on the steps; while a crowd of bareheaded children wait to lift it on their shoulders and bear it to the grave, their faces clouded over with superstitious awe.

Breton gamins are truly terrible. I have never seen children so wild, so shock-headed, so dirty, so impudent. They seem to spring up from the ground when you least expect them, with an outstretched greasy cap and a shrill-voiced appeal for "un petit sou pour l'amour de Dieu." They are intensely cruel to animals, and think nothing of dragging a live bird through the dust as a plaything, or keeping a grasshopper in torture till it dies.

The cultivation of bees seems to be the favourite hobby of Breton boys. The insects will come at their bidding, and will even cover them all over

without once stinging. It is the firm conviction of the Bretons that bees are sent as an especial blessing from heaven. Breton children, as Breton people in general, are a distinctive race, very proud of their nationality, and with a great dislike to being called French.

What is the Breton's home like? All the furniture is made of solid wood. There are benches and cupboards; enormous beds are let into the walls. The fireplace is very large, with seats on either side, where the father sits and smokes. All day long the mother seems to be hovering over some large pot that simmers on the fire: a sort of potpourri—everything seems to come out of it. On the mantelpiece are rows and rows of plates and bowls. All along the ceiling the family provisions are suspended: this is the larder of the Breton home. There are hams, huge onions, bunches of herbs, pork, and all sorts of things, which are never-failing attractions to baby's eyes. His chief food is cabbage-soup and bread. Early in youth, if his father is in the oyster trade, he is taught oyster culture, a very difficult art. You must know where your own particular bed is situated, so as to keep your oysters there. You must also know how to make your nets

MARKET DAY

BRITTANY

and mend them. Every boy learns to carve quickly and smoothly spoons and sabots. He is very superstitious and religious, especially if he is a fisher-boy. He never harms a robin redbreast, for he believes that this bird is descended from a certain one that plucked a thorn from the brow of Christ—a pretty fancy!

The Breton girl is of more importance in the household than her brother. She is a hard-working, vigorous person: she works from dawn till night, and sees that her brothers and sisters work as well. This Breton maid is consequential, apt to be domineering and priggish.

She is not entirely without intellect, though she is not very logical in her ideas; still, she has ideas, very strong ones too, on all sorts of deep and political matters. She loves to air these sentiments to her friends as they stroll over the bridge and through the village when the day's work is done. She is very much alive, this girl, with great force of character and considerable talent. She is ignorant of Latin, French, arithmetic, and everything outside her home circle; but meet her on her own ground and you will be struck by her ability. No one knows better than she how to make cabbage-soup, how to buy and sell,

how to feed the animals and superintend things generally.

Like her brother, she is superstitious, believing in witchcraft, charms, grotesque antidotes, and spells; she has all the traditions and legends of her country at her fingers' ends; and the smallest child will tell you all about every wayside church and castle in the neighbourhood. Who knows better than she how to dance, how to embroider, and how to sing patriotic songs? Her great passion is for flowers: she loves them as if they were live things. I once saw a Breton girl pulling up forget-me-not and primrose roots growing in a field, because she thought they must be unhappy there in the broiling sun. She walked all the way home with them for miles, carrying them tenderly in her hot hands. She set them in her window and watered them regularly. Alas, too regularly: they rotted at the roots, and pined, and died.

PLAYING SHOP

BRITTANY

A FAMILY

IN

BRITTANY

BELGIAN CHILDREN

MARGUERITE

FLEMISH

BELGIAN CHILDREN

In Belgium there are two distinct types of babies, as different in language, form, and temperament as though they were living hundreds of miles apart. The Walloon is an energetic, persevering person, with dark piercing eyes of intense brightness, eager and vivacious. The Fleming is ponderous, phlegmatic, dreamy, and blonde. The Walloon is slight and frail of figure, with a long face and long straight nose. The Fleming is bright, healthy, slightly prone to fatness, with soft eyes and clustering brown hair.

All over Belgium, among both Flemings and Walloons, the children are neat and trim. Schooling is cheap. In the provinces one still sees children going about in blouses, caps with projecting flaps, short striped skirts, and slipshod wooden shoes.

Flemish children are wonderfully imaginative.

They believe implicitly in the world of spirit and mystery—in supernatural huntsmen who, followed by hundreds of hounds, dash through the forests at midnight; in water sprites, Will-o'-the-wisps, and mermaids, weird men two feet high, wonderful goats guarding hidden treasure, and many other mysterious beings. For them the devil lives in the shape of a monstrous dark animal with goat's feet; some children declare they have seen him, with horns curving over his back and a long tail; others have come across him disguised as a black dog, or a gentleman in black, and vividly describe how they have escaped his clutches by crossing themselves or by clinging to a box-tree. There are all kinds of proverbs, legends, and sayings in which the devil takes part. Every child knows that by making the sign of the cross he can outwit the devil. Children make the sign before and after school, and while playing marbles, whispering, "Little cross, grant that he may miss."

The Belgian boy never feigns an illness, as I have known some children do: if he pretended to have a sore throat, a poultice of earthworms, which is supposed to cause great heat, would be applied. He can easily have a toothache, however; for the cure is harmless and interesting. The

ALL IN A ROW

HOLLAND

child has to take a nail with which the herbalist has touched his aching tooth and drive it into a tree; the pain will disappear as the nail penetrates the wood. If he feels animosity towards a boy who has laughed at the warts on his hands, revenge is swift and satisfying. Coming back from school, he makes as many knots on a piece of string as there are warts on his hands, and drops it on the ground; if the boy following him picks the string up, he will become the possessor of the infirmity.

When a wedding party passes, Belgian children light wisps of straw with paper flags attached, and in return they receive presents from the bride and bridegroom. In a certain district, on New Year's Day, boys run about the streets from morning until night, begging the passers-by to give them "nul"—wafers stamped with the crucifix; these they fasten above their doors as charms. It is the custom for a grown-up person to accompany the wafer with some coins. On New Year's Day a girl must ask the first boy she meets what his christian name is; and whatever it may be, that will surely be the name of her husband. If she wishes to dream of him she must eat a raw herring and her desire will be granted; and if she sees three lighted lamps, or peels a pear without

breaking the skin, she is to be married within the year. On Twelfth-night children go round all the doors singing rhymes; as a reward, they are given nuts and apples and pieces of bacon, which they spit on long willow-wands and roast at the fires. If anyone refuses to give wood for the children's bonfire he is pursued the next day and tormented; among other punishments they blacken his face. At Easter time, Belgian children firmly believe it is the bells that sow the eggs. On All Souls' Day boys never throw stones into the hedges or cut sticks, fearing to disturb the souls perched on the boughs; and all day long they go about swinging flower-pots full of lighted coals, crying, "A centime for the poor souls!"

A DUTCH MAID

TIRED

HOLLAND

BAVARIAN CHILDREN

MEDITATION

BAVARIA

BAVARIAN CHILDREN

PERHAPS no child in all the far-reaching Fatherland looks out upon scenery more beautiful than the forests and mountains of Bavaria. He is a chubby-faced, merry soul, the Bavarian baby, always clean and always happy. He coos and gurgles at the shining pots and platters in the kitchen; it must seem to him that his home is always being scoured, things mended, and generally set to rights. Later he toddles out to the cowshed to see the cows. And what fun it is when the Alpine herds come home from the mountains, and baby is dressed in his best clothes! Father carries him aloft on his shoulder, that he may see the long procession of cows led by the beautiful queen cow, which is hung all over with Alpine flowers, and comes down the mountain path with tinkling bell. He loves the dear, patient-eyed creatures, and laughs with glee at the calves running

so happily beside their mothers. By and by, as baby grows older, he too will be entrusted with the care of these lovely beasts; he will learn the constitution, the temper, and the disposition of the animals, which in time will come at his call. The Bavarian herd-boys are quite a class among themselves. They drive their flocks upward to eat the grass that grows in the clefts of the rocks and on the broad green slopes, and they themselves stare at the skies, and dream and wonder all the summer through—the summer which is so short in the mountains, yet so green and radiant while it lasts. They dream among the flowers in the meadows, among the long rushes by the river's edge, and muse and wonder,—wonder where the wild grey-green water has been in its travels. Meanwhile, their ewes and lambs have been roaming about among the mountains, and some have perhaps strayed into the woods. No matter: that only means a glorious hunt, which the vivid imagination of small boys easily changes into a chamois hunt, although they have probably seen no more of sport than the powder being put into the rifles. And then, when they are tired of hunting and dreaming, there are butterflies to catch, chestnuts and apples to pick, and low stone-

walls to scale, as they walk slowly after the tinkle of the cow-bells. Onwards they wander, through green meadows, past great mountains, over long wooden bridges where the grey-green glacier-fed water rushes, past enchanting little houses with latticed panes and iron gratings. A delightful life is this to these rosy-cheeked, brown-haired Bavarian children; yet how soon, how terribly soon, it is over! The hay is tossed in the meadows, and the summer, all green and gold, has flashed by.

Then there is the winter to face, the long white silent winter. Roads are blocked, waggons cease to run, and all the world seems fast asleep, save for the roaring wind; yet Bavarian boys must trot to school over the snow every day and learn all sorts of wise things. How glad they are at the end of the day when they can run home and cluster round the stove! There, in the friendly, invigorating warmth, they eat their bread-and-milk and slices of bread, each with his wooden spoon, like one of the three bears. Then there are such glorious fairy tales to be told and to listen to: the romantic traditions of the country furnish splendid themes. All sorts of queer fancies, too, are made out of the picture on the china stove

while chestnuts are roasted and the wind roars and the powdery snow is drifting.

Every Bavarian child has a patron saint, under whose protection he is, and the ideas conjured round about the figure of the saint are sometimes very beautiful. The boy listens eagerly to anything connected with his own saint; he knows the saint's life thoroughly, and strives to model his own simple career on the heroic lines of the glorious namesake.

SWISS CHILDREN

A BABY OF INTERLAKEN

SWITZERLAND

SWISS CHILDREN

THE life of the Swiss child has a strange intensity. It is spent in a country which half the year round is wrapped in snow. The hamlets slumber in snow, the snow sparkles in the sunlight; but everything is bleak and formless. The child is born in a hut of rough-hewn stone, or, more often, in a small wooden house in a settlement of wooden houses, clustering round a doll's church. He lies in a room panelled with wood, and winks and laughs at the inlaid work on the cupboards, at the painted plates on the dresser, and in the summer at the flowers in the window and at the bees. He watches his father at carpenter work, and his mother weaving the cloth for his jackets,—for almost everything in Switzerland is made at home. During the winter, if he cares to look out of the window, what does he see? Valleys filled with opaque blue, from which peaks rise like pallid phantoms into grey air, pine forests of dark indigo, heavy with snow,

and chalets looming strangely through the semi-solid whiteness. The shadows are blue, and the sky is as blue as steel, the distant peaks sparkle like silver; all is silent, still, and weird in this strange white world. The cottagers know well what an avalanche is — a terrible mass of snow that ploughs up the woods and pours down on the villages, carrying loss of life to many.

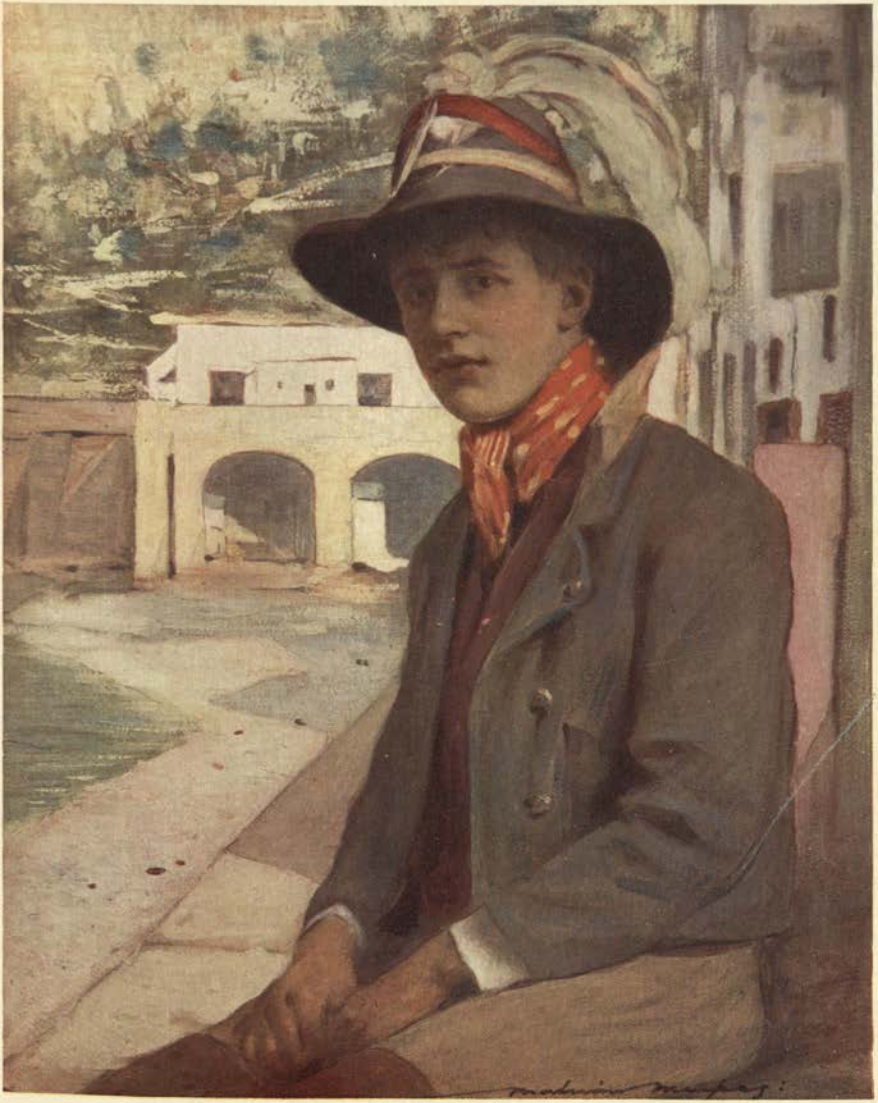
A Swiss baby born in summer has a very different outlook, gayer, yet not more beautiful,— that would be impossible. He lives in a pretty homestead, burnt almost black by the sun, and covered all over with hops. He looks out on a garden blossoming with magnificent white lilies. If baby is strong enough and old enough he goes forth to play in the meadows among the waving grass, or in the garden, bright with flowers thrusting up their jewelled heads. There are lilacs, crocuses, pale anemones, geraniums, and lilies; it is impossible to describe the brilliancy and rarity of these summer flowers. What the Swiss baby loves most of all is to go into the orchard and pick the cherries, or to sit on the freshly-mown hay. He blinks at the cherries dipping and dancing among the leaves, and watches his elder brother climb to the topmost branch, filling a basket as he goes.

The children bring their midday meal to the orchard,—dried meat, potatoes, and prunes. The older boys help to mind the herds and make the hay. One lovely morning in June the cows are sent off to the highlands in a long procession. Such a tinkling of bells as they mount up and up on the heathery slopes! Each day spent under the azure skies, with the majestic mountains on every side, is a perfect paradise to the Swiss herd-boy. He is shaggily clad in rough serge, sturdy, ready to bear storm and rain. It is such summers as these that endear the heart of the Swiss lad to his country. He grows up sinewy and vigorous, tall, spare, and broad-shouldered, sedate and cautious, with great nerve and fibre. Through rain and sunshine he lives bareheaded, and his thick hair becomes a wavy mane. He strides over the hill-sides with a long and swinging tread, alert and indefatigable; a stag-like face and figure are his, with almost a regal carriage of the proud, well-shaped head. The Swiss boy loves to go with his father at the end of summer, when the trees have turned from green to orange, to toboggan down from the heights on the loads of hay and wood into the valley. In winter he goes to school and learns German and arithmetic and Swiss history.

ITALIAN CHILDREN

AT CAPRI

ITALY



ITALIAN CHILDREN

PERHAPS no child in this world leads so entirely free, wild, and happy a life as the Italian baby. There is literally no end to the fuss and love which is expended on him. To see a family in Italy thoroughly elated, to find the neighbours beaming, and the dogs barking, and the hens cackling, is to know for certain that somewhere or other a baby has been born. Italians are warm-hearted people; they love anything small and helpless; and besides, they have a pleasant superstition that so long as babies continue to be born, the world is not yet coming to an end. No matter how poor the household may be when the infant appears, they begin at once to prepare a feast; the table is loaded with expensive dishes such as a peasant rarely sees, and baby himself will never partake of, unless he in his turn attends a christening.

All the friends of the family are invited, and

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some lady of high rank generally condescends to grace the company with her presence. Amid much pomp and ceremony the hero of the hour is carried to the church and there baptised, after which quite a levée is held in the vestry, where master baby is kissed and fondled; and lastly, which is far more to the point, each guest as he leaves the church tucks a small silver coin into the tightly-bound christening robe. Italian parents love their children dearly, and in their love for them are almost like children themselves; they enter into their games, their joys and their sorrows; in fact, it is difficult to discover where childhood ends and maturity begins. Italians are the best mothers and fathers in the world; they regard motherhood as a religion, not as a drudgery; as in Brittany, children are considered blessed gifts from God. In every Italian family baby has always the best of it; though his elder brothers and sisters are sometimes pinched and starving, he is ever fat and contented. He is taken everywhere and allowed untold privileges. No Italian mother will willingly consent to leave her baby: the fat cherubs sleeping contentedly in their cradles on the barrel organs of European cities, who are lifted up to our windows and told to kiss their hands to the pretty ladies,

FIAMMETTA

ITALY

are taken about far less for effect than out of pure love. Children are adored in Italy; and though the small houses are crowded because of them, and the food is scarce because of them, not one of these mischievous black-eyed elves would be parted with, not one of them but is as welcome as the day. Everyone makes way for a child; parents, in their love and care for the babies, become gentlemen and gentlewomen; harsh voices are modulated for a baby's ear; the price of sweets is lowered by the veriest Jew of a street vendor; and more than one handsome lawless brigand has been known to come down from his mountain fastness, stride through the neighbouring town, and, at the risk of his life, demand that his child shall be baptised.

To find the real typical Italian child, natural and unsophisticated, one should search among the peasantry, peer in and out of fish-markets, frequent mud hovels in the country, saunter down by-streets and canals in the towns, dare the brigands and outlaws on their topmost heights, where children will be found in abundance, — sweet, brown-skinned creatures, bewitchingly pretty and much spoiled. One finds children by the score in the old tumble-down streets of picturesque Florence, by zigzag

weather-beaten houses of most glorious colours. Among the mountains, in their blue tunics and flat caps, are very happy boys. These are herds, who climb as well as any goat, and are just as lightly clad. How often have I seen them among the olive, lemon, and orange terraces, beautiful, with dusky peach complexions and smooth hair, and how well I remember the smell of the oranges, and the small brown faces peeping from amongst them! You see round, gleeful babies tumbling about on the sunny shore of Naples, naked and glad in the radiant air, under the clear blue sky. What a splendid country it is! Cactus fruit, green and black figs, red tomatoes and pomegranates, are ready waiting for a child's hand to pluck; there are boats with pretty striped sails, and villas with marbles and palms. The children can play in the sun, and the light and the air kiss and send them to sleep; small wonder that they are always merry, always singing, and running and leaping among the blue waters. You see children in Italy round the churches, where all sorts of trades are carried on in the open air; girls and boys are everywhere. The elders bawl and shout and scream while they vend their wares, as though the world would come to an end

CARITA

ITALY

if the penny handkerchief and the halfpenny vase were not sold, and the children chatter, chatter like birds, though it is a musical chatter. These children, even though they do not understand religion, love the beautiful church round which they gather gaily. They love it in the morning when the sun turns it into gold; they love it in the nights of winter underneath the wonderful brilliant stars; they love it as some living thing, and each one weaves his own story round about its massive portals. There seems to be a general love of beautiful things prevalent among the Italians, which even the children share.

The Venetian street-boy never seems to have the slightest disposition to quarrel. He is a handsome person, and in winter goes about with a solemn countenance, bareheaded and in tatters, with wooden-soled shoes open at the heels. In summer he is extraordinarily clean; he is constantly leaping off bridges into canals, and he has an apparently insatiable appetite for fruit. He is dark-haired, bronze-complexioned, with lustrous black eyes, and walks with a buoyant grace, despite his wooden shoes. He leads a lazy outdoor life, with nothing particular to do; he is driven by no impulse; his life is idle, stagnant, quiet. When he takes to

begging he does it out of a spirit for adventure and to pass the time. There is no cringing about the Italian beggar: he does it with a splendid daring; he demands money from you frankly, for begging is considered no disgrace in Italy.

All Italian boys are fond of animals, and will become attached to some especial pet, as, for instance, a donkey. Twice a day a boy will drive his donkey into the nearest town with the cart full of fruit, and return in the evening fast asleep. But not too sleepy, not too lazy, however tiring the day may have been, to house his donkey snugly, and to pull some tender golden carrots, watching with joy the ready way the donkey takes them with his long, soft, grey upper lip.

The grace and beauty of Italian children is something quite unusual. They may be dirty, and they are certainly given to thieving; but from an artistic point of view they are perfect. Each child is a picture in himself: you cannot find an Italian child that does not throw himself naturally into a picturesque attitude. And they are as charming in manner as they are graceful in form, exceedingly sweet-voiced, with the happy faculty of winning their way into all hearts, native and foreign.

BIANCA

ITALY

The bambino is allowed free licence everywhere: he may do whatever he likes—all the world knows that. He loves to eat melons, and wash his face in the fragrant juice; to eat bread and garlic, to sing, to dance beneath the vineyards; and no one says him nay.

He is very ignorant. Naturally he has a splendid memory, and learns well; but he never troubles his head about school, and neither do his parents. He loves to talk, chattering all day; and there is nothing he dislikes so much as solitude. He would bear anything—cold, hunger, pain—except being left alone.

They live out of doors, these children,—in the streets, and under the lemon, citron, and oleander trees. A mother never feels afraid to send her child out, accompanied by a dog, to play on the hillsides. She blesses the child and prays for its safety. The rest she leaves to Providence. No one will harm a bambino. The dog will guard him, and lead him safely home.

When he is old enough this child will do his share of work in the fields, and in the winter time he will take his models of fruits and flowers to great cities and try to sell them.

He loves to play at Pallone and Bocce, pretty

games of ball, and Ruzzola. But he loves, above all, the Carnival time, when all the world goes mad, and everyone is allowed to do as he pleases. There is no fixed time then for the child to go to bed; he can run about the streets all day, throw confetti, and laugh at harlequins and clowns, and dwarfs and giants, and funny masks of donkeys, bears, and wolves, to his heart's content; no one will forbid him. Everyone treats him gently, and gives him sweets and flowers. Sometimes he takes a bird in a cage and sells it at the Carnival.

ON A GONDOLA

ITALY

GIOVANNI

ITALY

SICILIAN CHILDREN

ROUGH LOCKS

SICILY

SICILIAN CHILDREN

THE children of Sicily are classical, very little changed for thousands of years. Their appearance remains almost the same; one feels that it has been chiselled in bronze, and their profiles vaguely remind one of ancient coins. Certainly they possess a trait which has been handed down to them from their ancestors, and that is the gift of oratorical speech. All Sicilian children are orators by nature: words come glibly to their tongues, and neat sentences and smart sayings are common among them. A Sicilian child does not search for blackberries: he is too much occupied in seeking for epigrammatic phrases and well-turned sentences. You will often find two schoolboys, instead of pitching into each other in the ordinary way with fists, sitting on a wall with their coats off after school, pouring out streams of oratorical talk, one against the other. Pity the stranger that

happens to offend one of these disputants: his unexpressive English or slight smattering of Sicilian will avail him little against their brilliant flow of biting sarcasm and ridicule: he will be forced to retire, beaten and mortified.

Once the swift and fiery Sicilian temper is roused, beware! The only safeguard then is not to understand the language. Most English people are saved in this way; but one has an instinct that one is getting the worst of it, judging from the expression on the faces of the children looking on. Sicilian children go about lightly and negligently clothed, and they are strange to the eye of the travelling Englishman; but let him engage one of these urchins in conversation, and see who comes out victorious! To attempt to argue in a market is of course quite preposterous. And if you want a child to sit as a model, the Sicilian names a price, usually a very high one, and by the tone of voice in which he demands the sum you know it is quite useless to try to beat him down; you will only lose time, and be worsted in the end. These young rascals are demons with the voices and the faces of angels. They have always an eye for the painter. When they see him coming they throw themselves into attitudes as if they were models for Sir Alma

Tadema, making beautiful pictures, with one arm lightly poised on a stone bridge, and the head thrown well back to show the nostril. Sometimes they make a mistake—it is a fearful "'Arry" who is coming along. Then, and only then, a Sicilian child is embarrassed—his flow of conversation is stopped for the time being, and the expression on the faces of his companions who are watching is entertaining.

Nowhere in the world is green so green and blue sky so wonderfully blue as in Sicily, and the occasional clothing of the children is just as brilliant. The girls, with their bright silk handkerchiefs, glossy black hair, and dusty peach complexions, form quite a blaze of colour.

Boys abound in Sicily, bright-eyed wretches with splendid features, full of daring and mischief. If the old brigandage has been wiped out, certainly the spirit that prompted it has not. The boys clamour to act as guides for you through the towns, and in such a way that you cannot well refuse them and preserve a dignified demeanour at the same time. A certain class of boy lives almost always in the water; he swims and fishes and dives all day; and babies have gourds attached to their backs to prevent them from sinking.

One Sicilian custom that always struck me as being rather pathetic is that whenever a child is very ill, delicate, or likely to die, it is dressed up as the Christ child and paraded round the streets, where it is received with hushed voices, on bended knees and with uncovered heads.

SPANISH CHILDREN

AN EMBRYO COOK

SPAIN

SPANISH CHILDREN

WHAT different baby eyes are opening all over the world, and on what different pillows, looking out of such different windows! Yet the same generous sun shines down on all, and blesses each tiny head, whether it be black, or brown, or flaxen, gently caressing each soft round cheek, no matter what complexion. What does a Spanish baby look out upon when he opens his magnificent black eyes? A courtyard with fountains, and flowers, and fallen petals; a courtyard into which all the chambers of the house open, the kernel of a Spanish home. Here some of his merriest hours are spent, and here his handsome mother sits and gossips with her neighbours all day long about nothing. She goes in a leisurely way about her house work, drawing water and peeling potatoes, talking all the while, always vivacious, her black eyes sparkling and her red lips open wide, showing

her gleaming white teeth; talking now to her baby, now to a neighbour, now to herself, singing snatches of song now and then in a low, melodious voice. She has endowed baby with her own black eyes and hair, and by-and-by the child will have her own grace of movement, which is more like floating and gliding than walking. She teaches it to use a fan as she herself does, and she lays her baby down in a graceful attitude, suggestive of Murillo. She is careless and light-hearted. If baby bumps his head against the stone wall she picks him up with a laugh and the philosophic remark that what is bound to happen cannot be helped, and that he must stop crying, because "Are not the Spaniards the best soldiers in Europe?" All day long baby is eating something or other, some dainty morsel—cooked chestnuts, sweet potatoes and garlic, an egg, a slice of melon, pomegranate salad, a cup of chocolate—all in the cool, stone-floored courtyard, with its closed shutters. Superstitious bands of gold, or of silver, or of jet, are hung round baby's neck. In certain parts of Spain his mother greets him on his birth by knocking him over the head with a plate. If the plate breaks he is considered a sensible, hard-headed child; if not, he is bound to cause sorrow. As a girl-baby grows older she

HELPING MOTHER

SPAIN

apes her mother absolutely—her way of walking, the way she wears her shawl—and she becomes a fascinating person, with a pale spiritual light in her clear face, witty, bright, and dark, with superb hair and small feet. She is brought up in a sort of caressing atmosphere; her birthright is charm and seductiveness. She is soon mature, gay, humorous, passionate; shadow and sun chase each other across her face with extraordinary rapidity; her colouring is rich, and there is something intoxicating in the quality of her charm, like the scent of syringa. She is full of energy; she lives every moment of her life, from early morn when the sun shines in through her window, until bedtime when she looks down upon the streets which have sunk to sleep so early and lie so strangely quiet under the bright sky and stars; she is amid constant blitheness and animation, where pleasure is the chief aim of existence. This is the atmosphere in which a Spanish baby is brought up. Sunshine, flowers, orange groves, palm-trees, alleys of acacias, houses painted a tender rose-colour, pale-green, fresh-butter colour, and a variety of prismatic hues, brought to perfection by the blaze of the sun—these are her natural background. In such a genial atmo-

sphere children blossom and thrive. In Valencia, where the summer heat is almost tropical, where aloes grow to gigantic proportions, and the mountains are covered with the dark-green foliage of carrot-trees, you find children armed with long sticks, beating the branches to bring down the ripe pods, or loading donkeys with fruit until they almost disappear beneath the heavily-stocked baskets. You catch occasional glimpses of well-bred Valencian babies half-hidden by long striped curtains and small purple oleander thickets; you see happy crowing children, struggling in the laps of clear, brown-faced, black-haired girls, with roses stuck coquettishly over their left ears. You see girls in the market-places, with tresses black as the raven's wing, caught up into chignons with gold pins, carrying about trays of fruit, consisting of oranges with leaves attached, loads of fresh dates, and luscious bunches of grapes.

You see the children of Andalusia, with complexions of deep amber, regular features, thick, well-marked eyebrows, long eyelashes and small dark eyes, playing at bull-fights just as our children play at soldiers. One boy on his knees, with a ferocious expression, takes the part of the bull about to charge, one the part of espada with

LIGHT AND SHADE

jacket and willow wand, while another, mounted on his brother's shoulders, takes the proud rôle of picador.

At Cadiz, against a background of rose-coloured palaces, flat Eastern roofs, and yellow porcelain domes, you see barelegged boys fishing for red mullet in the delicious light-green water, balancing long cane rods, ignoring the passers-by ; wonderfully patient people these, sitting on the quays for hours and hours, whispering gentle adjurations to the great sea to yield up their dinner. Terra-cotta imps of boys dive and splash joyously off the brown rocks.

Then, there is the child of the cigarreras, placed by his chatting quick-eyed mother in a rude cradle at her side, which is occasionally set rocking by her impatient foot. Baby watches her wonderingly with his big black eyes as she dexterously folds up the brown leaf into a twisted tube and fastens the end of the cigar. He has nothing on save a dirty white shirt, and round his fat neck dangles an ivory band.

In Malaga you see donkey-boys by the score, wearing loose white linen drawers, and thwacking their animals with stout sticks. They are merry, happy-go-lucky children. A Spanish boy is rarely

miserable or too much fatigued to enjoy himself. He will sweat all day at the olive presses, and come home at night merry and gay, ready to go mad at the distant tinkle of a guitar.

Spanish children of the lower classes spend their days for the most part basking in the sun, with always an eye for the occasional visitor from whom they can beg alms. Gipsy children swarm everywhere in the country, and form quite a colony of their own. They live in grottoes excavated in the rock, looking more like rabbit-burrows than human habitations. These often have but one aperture, with no windows, and the only opening of any kind is a small slit made in the roof by which the smoke can escape. There are one or two dilapidated articles of furniture, and heaps of dried leaves serve as beds. On fine days the gipsy children are to be envied; for they have the wild hills and all nature for their playmates, and they sleep under the green melon mountains. But when the weather drives them indoors their lot is sad indeed. Half-naked and half-starved, they roll about in the dust with the hens and the pigs and the dogs; and then their lives are sordid and unlovely indeed. They are timid, wild creatures, with skins of a coppery tint, hair black and wavy, eyes like those of wild-

IN A COURT-YARD, SEVILLE

SPAIN

cats, a graceful carriage, bodies supple and healthy. Their hair is carefully combed, wonderfully black, and wreathed with natural flowers. They are imaginative, idle souls, proud in their beggary and ignorance.

RUSSIAN CHILDREN

WAITING

RUSSIA

RUSSIAN CHILDREN

WHERE the fierce Asiatic gales plough deep furrows in the drifts of snow, where those who went as prisoners to Siberia have made their settlement, let us take a peep in at the door of a single-storied cottage, and see what child life is there. Amid what terrible sadness is the baby reared! His father is fettered with armlets and anklets of steel; his mother shivers and sobs all day, not daring to cry aloud for fear of those awful Cossack whips. The only wonder is that Siberian babies ever blossom into maturity at all: to be nipped as early buds in the freezing cold, by aching want, seems their most natural fate. Yet even in Siberia babies laugh and coo, and strut happily enough about the earthen floor of their mud homes; children run about among the convicts in their white sheepskin coats, looking like little mummies; and baby girls, with their cropped hair, big sabots, and

blue dresses, manage somehow or other to lead gay, peaceful lives, as children will all the world over, however hard their lot. It is the mother of the family that suffers: for her the future as well as the present is gloomy and hopeless indeed. But let us turn from the tragedies of convict life to Siberia's more prosperous children, flaxen-haired children, plump and rosy-cheeked, playing round the home farm in red tunics, each with a medallion of St Paul round his neck.

A long pole balanced on a block of wood serves as a splendid see-saw. A wooden horse and sometimes a trapeze are the chief toys of the young Siberian. They love colour, these little people, deep purples, and greens, and full browns; and each square roof in summer time bears a goodly display of bright-hued flowers, which cheers the heart of the laughing baby. Father is often away hunting, and he is sure to have some tales to tell them of his adventures when he returns home, tired and hungry, in the evening. Sometimes these children, while playing outside their houses, are scared by the sight of a monstrous white bear; but the sound of the brown bears in the forest lulls them to sleep—for them they care not a jot. Courage, enterprise, and resolution are the char-

acteristics of the Siberian children; they are eager and imaginative, and have the power to overcome severe difficulties, to disdain hunger and thirst and other hardships. A child has been known to stab an aged grandfather rather than allow him to suffer the pangs of extreme hunger.

A more picturesque side of life is that of Russia's well-to-do children, wonderfully graceful, flower-like people, the children of the aristocracy. The girls among them lead carefully-protected, almost exotic, lives: their games are played in hot-houses, and they rarely venture out of doors except in sleighs, warmly wrapped in furs. Exceedingly well-bred children these, with marvellously pale complexions and masses of black wavy hair; seven or eight languages are quite a few for them to have acquired; and their musical voices and charming diplomatic manners have a slight touch of Orientalism. Boys, on the contrary, are brought up on rather Spartan principles: they are rarely allowed bedding: in fact, a wooden cot to lie on, and a woollen rug to curl themselves up in, is considered ample accommodation. Their fare is of the simplest, dinner being invariably cabbage soup and beef; sweetened rum to put in their tea is considered a great luxury; there never was

a boy who did not care to spend his pocket-money on cigarettes, and the young Russian is no exception to the rule. They are curiously featured, with close-cropped hair and a princely bearing, auto cratic in the nursery, with never an idea but to be obeyed; and they think nothing of severely chastising a serf, who, subdued by untold generations of tyranny, submits meekly. Small boys drive about a great deal; but many of them have not explored even one length of their own territory, so extensive is it. On the whole, they are quiet little souls, with a tendency to talk to themselves. Their great ambition is to hunt. The huntsman comes into their father's study in the morning, equipped with his big horn and a knife, a ferocious expression on his face.

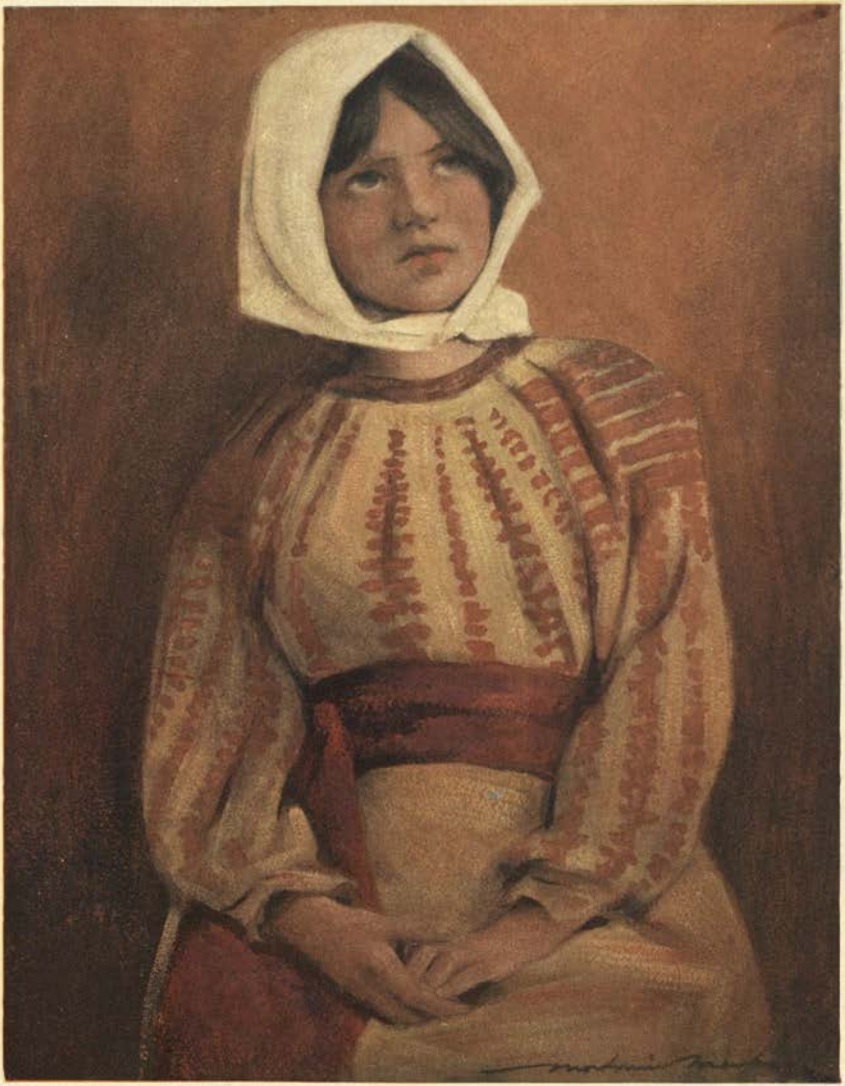
The boys are allowed to ride down and see their father off, and hundreds of lambswool caps are doffed as they appear; but they are not yet allowed to join in the sport,—which hurts their feelings very much. A very different life is this from that of the peasant boy, the serf. The Russian baby peasant feels that he is like the neglected cattle by whom he is surrounded. He is a child of the soil; his very clothing is the colour of the soil, but he never changes it, for he does not care.

If he is ill, he may sicken and die, and none will mind, himself perhaps least of all. Baby feels the cold terribly in the winter: it gnaws at his tiny body like a wolf. He lives on the stove, the great good-natured stove, which is almost a god to him: he plays there, and eats there, and sleeps there. The hut seems to be unnecessarily full of brothers and sisters and cattle; but he is fairly happy in his own little way. As he grows older the realities of the situation are forced upon his understanding, and he settles down not uncheerfully to his uneventful life. Most probably he will not be bothered by school: very few Russians learn to read or write. He grows up into a man, dreamy, good-natured, unpractical, and very ignorant, thinking little of to-morrow and much of the present moment. He depends for his knowledge upon his neighbours and his priest; he implicitly believes everything he is told, and is exceedingly superstitious. He is fond of change, detesting work of any kind, while his greatest pleasure consists in a gossip in a tavern over a glass of brandy. He thieves a little and begs a little, and is always under the belief that some day or other his position will be bettered.

ROUMANIAN CHILDREN

NIGHT

ROUMANIAN



ROUMANIAN CHILDREN

CHILDREN living on the plains of Roumania lead unpicturesque, uneventful lives, unflavoured by any spice of romance. The ordinary home is very primitive indeed, being in fact no more than a large hole or pit, lined inside with clay and roofed over with branches and twigs. Here baby is born, and here he grows up, if indeed he ever grows up at all; for more often than not, the great bogey, the insatiable dragon, marsh fever, sweeps over the plains, carrying in its wake a child or so out of each family. If the Roumanian child should complain of his unlovely dwelling or dull career, which is not at all likely, his grandfather, or even his father, would tell him that he is much safer there than in a house above ground, and thrilling stories would follow of how bands of robbers had been known in the old days to attack

the houses and carry away the children. A child, as he grows older, is allowed to work with his elders in the fields of maize, among the yellow gourds and kitchen vegetables. You see him there working away in his long white linen blouse and trousers, in his round felt hat and sandals. But his sister works even harder than he does: she puts forth her puny strength to help to make roads and to dig railway embankments, working with her square-bladed spade far more energetically than her brother.

To see a pleasanter picture and less barbarous lives we must travel inland, away from the Danube, when we shall presently come to a country glowing with almost tropical plants, where giant trees of every kind grow, as well as fruits and vines. There baby is born in a proper brick house, roofed in by slates and tiles; and the garden is all ablaze with roses, geraniums, verbenas, asters, and mignonette. Later in life he will be able to pick the plums and peaches and bunches of fine grapes that attract his bright black eyes now, and sell them in the market.

The Roumanian baby, as a rule, is not badly off. His father, though he may be very poor, can

generally afford a cottage and a garden, for land is comparatively cheap in Roumania.

As children grow older they are taught to become carpenters, joiners, painters, and tin-workers. They work from sunrise to sunset, these little ones, with only two hours' leisure in which to eat their meal of bread and onions. There are holidays to look forward to during their months of toil: in fact, there are over a hundred holidays in the year. But this does not make things any better for the Roumanian family, as father spends his earnings at the wine-shop and returns home cross and empty-handed, while mother goes about for days sad and worried, and the children are very hungry. Girls are taught early in life to weave and spin and embroider, for the day soon comes when they must make all the clothing of the family.

Then, there are the Roumanian gipsy children, hundreds of them, taught very early to carry loads of brick and mortar, and to perform every kind of drudgery. A hard life is theirs. Children go about half-naked, and their food is maize meal flavoured with salt. They are treated no better than the negroes were. No greater contrast can be imagined than the florid, fair-haired, blue-eyed

Roumanian babies, and the gipsy babies with skins as black as sloes, jet-black hair, and black eyes.

Roumanian children have a passion for bright colours and music.

MOORISH CHILDREN

AT TANGIER

MOROCCO

MOORISH CHILDREN

THE Moorish child is a handsome person, and he dresses with an elegance which is both simple and brilliant. He presents a very dignified appearance in his great muslin turban and flowing caftan of jasmine or rose colour. Very sedate he looks, this small Moor, as he moves slowly and noiselessly through the crowded bazaars and by the doorways of mosques, where the air is heavy with aloes and spices. His gait shows a habit of thought quite unlike our own: one feels somehow that he looks upon life very differently. He is not much occupied with his own affairs, nor yet with the affairs of others. The small, fine features wear a vague, absent expression. He seldom smiles, as he walks slowly, as though in a dream, down the white street under the blue heavens, and steps into a house as if into a prison. He goes through life decorously and seriously, this

native of Morocco, and he plays games as though they were some melancholy task. Yet beneath his solemn, quiet exterior there lies a nature as wild and ferocious, as impetuous and hot, as that of some untamed tiger-cat. I once saw two small boys, apparently engrossed in watching a game of ball, suddenly pounce upon each other, with eyes gleaming and every nerve strained, tearing and biting with teeth and nails in a savage, inhuman manner, which all the force of their parents in trying to keep them apart could scarcely subdue. Such terrible passion underlying so calm a surface frightens one.

A Moorish boy is a brilliant, graceful creature by nature: he could not be clumsy if he tried. He rides in such a style as I have never seen elsewhere; he is well-bred, well-dressed, and the personification of courtesy.

Very early in life he goes to school and studies under a master to whom he is invariably attached; friendships are often formed between master and scholar that last during a whole lifetime. The young Moor learns many things at school besides ordinary lessons; and arithmetic, in which he is by nature apt, does not trouble him much. Of course, the Koran must be learnt by heart.

MID-DAY

MOROCCO

Farming, mechanics, poetry, and music also are taught. Little need is there to teach the young Moor poetry and music: the love for them is born in him, and early in life he shows astonishing appreciation in both arts.

He is somewhat of a fop, this Moorish boy: he wears embroidered jackets, perfumed handkerchiefs, gold-headed canes, delicate red morocco slippers, and silken sashes. But put him in a plain white shirt and he will be just as dignified, just as graceful, just as interesting.

Then, there are the Arab children, funny souls, enveloped almost before they can toddle in long voluminous white robes, with hoods drawn over their heads, as if they were Dominican friars. Now and then the hood falls back and shows a shaven head, with one long black lock hanging down at the back and several tufts of hair curiously shaped. They are pale, attractive people, who, as you pass, stare at you fixedly in rather an unflattering way, and with an expression of intelligence far beyond their years.

Arab children curl themselves up into balls and bundles and go to sleep anywhere—on steps, in doorways, and even in the middle of the road, with the greatest facility in the world.

When walking they have a strange freedom and nobility of bearing. Their greatest joy is to cluster round some Moorish storyteller, an antiquated man, with a long beard and shining eyes, and listen while he tells them fairy tales, and gets more and more excited with every word. When these boys are really rebellious their father punishes them by fastening an iron round their legs, which they must carry about night and day, and so long as they are naughty they must wear it. I knew an obstinate boy who wore an iron on an emaciated leg for three years.

Honey pudding, eggs, and butter are the delicacies which are most attractive to the Arab children.

In the country they live in tents made of camel hair, and go about happily enough half-naked, ready to steal anything and everything they come across. They are very superstitious, these children: they will not touch anything over which a European shadow has been cast, and to make a few mystic signs over an article is enough to prevent them from even looking at it again. The baby Arab never uses a fork or a knife: he lives by the rule that fingers were made before knives and forks, and he tears apart chicken, game, fish, and

AT PLAY

MOROCCO

in fact everything, with a few rapid movements of the hands and a dexterity quite wonderful, without even dropping a fragment.

It is interesting to watch an Arab child go to market. He never utters a word; but he gets everything he wants and moves off with his purchases in silence.

There are two kinds of Arab children, the boys who live in the towns and the boys who live in tents. The Bedouins, the tent-dwellers, are the real Arabs, the descendants of Ishmael. It is among them that you will find the ancient customs and beliefs and habits of everyday life almost unchanged from the days of Abraham. The Bedouin boy has a hard life. He is taught to buy and sell cleverly, to drive sharp bargains, to judge character, and to flatter. He is also taught to make coffee (not such an easy accomplishment as one might imagine), for the first rule in the lives of the Bedouins is to be hospitable, to be able to prepare the best of everything for their guests. He is taught to perfect his wonderful senses of smell, sight, and hearing, to travel in the hot desert without complaining, to bear hunger and pain stoically, and above all, to ride.

An Arab, be he Bedouin or town-bred, is never

rude to his mother. He looks upon her as a sacred being; and though he may behave badly to his father, to his mother he is ever courteous, gentle, and kind. Here another of the ancient traditions bears fruit; for he is taught what Hagar bore for Ishmael, and he never forgets it.

Neither Bedouin girls nor women ever veil their faces. Hospitality is so much a usage among Arabs that the services of a woman cannot be dispensed with. One naturally wishes to present one's fairest and best for the comfort and happiness of a guest, and a woman can do much in this way that is impossible to a man. Arab girls bring sweet-scented oils, and musk, and ointment to refresh the weary stranger; they are the entertainers; it is for them to laugh, and chat, and drink coffee with their father's guests, whether it is agreeable to them or not; such a heinous sin as breaking the laws of hospitality is quite unknown in Morocco. The girls are taught to cook, to make bread as thin as a wafer, and preserves scented with essence of roses; also to weave gay scarves and haircloth. They are taught the subtler lessons of coquetry and scheming; how to wheedle and outwit men, to plot and plan; and to be graceful, to stand and walk and run well.

Bedouin girls are brave to a degree; they follow in the precepts of Ayeshah, the wife of Mahommed, who led men to battle hundreds of years ago. Never must they flinch before danger, or show themselves to be cowardly.

The Arab child loves dates and ostrich eggs, and as a matter of course he smokes.

The town boy leads a life of refinement and luxury. There are plenty of grapes to eat and horses to ride. What splendid beasts these Arab horses are, and how carefully nurtured! A boy feeds his horse on meat, date paste, and camels' milk; he would die rather than part with it; this tradition is no fiction. He inherits horses from his father, and knows their characters and histories.

GEOGRAPHY LESSON

PALESTINE

EGYPTIAN CHILDREN

BOY TAILOR

EGYPT

EGYPTIAN CHILDREN

EGYPT, the land of dust, sunlight, and mystery, above all other countries seems to have preserved its race intact. One sees small antique figures running about the streets of ordinary everyday Cairo, beautifully proportioned, and absolutely unaltered from the tiny creatures on ancient vases and statuettes with which one has become so familiar in the British and South Kensington Museums. And, so beautiful and pure in line are they, one feels that the only true medium in which to represent them would be silver. They start life, these children, lazily lying about on the hot desert sand, clothed only in a white shirt, and dreaming delicious dreams among the reeds by the water, hardly longer than a reed themselves. They never attempt to walk or crawl, as is the wont of most babies, but simply lie there, half in and half out of the water, basking like large dragon-flies in the

heat, and watching with some show of interest the careers of green lizards darting in and out of the sand, in just the same lazy, dignified manner in which as men they will dream through the whole of their lives. But these indolent people are polite; they are trained with much care in deportment, and are extremely courteous one to another; even while lying in the sand, their movements are expressive of their very decorous upbringing. It is only when they become walking, talking boys and girls that another element not quite so attractive shows itself, and that is when Egyptian children happen to meet a racial enemy,—for in Egypt there is a mixture of different groups and castes, all simply loathing one another. Whenever this occurs a child is allowed to go to the opposite extreme, and to be as rude as it is possible for a human being to be, contriving rudeness, thinking it out scientifically in a way that we in the West have no conception of; in fact, one cannot write about the extraordinary manner in which Egyptian children will strive to insult their enemies.

Nearly all the boys have their gardens; every one of them begins to garden from the moment he can toddle. His plot of ground is his greatest joy, his paradise; and as he grows older he

THE DONKEY RIDE

EGYPT

begins to cultivate it intelligently, with a view to selling the fruit; and there is perhaps nothing more melodious and beautiful than the cries of these boys as they hawk the luscious wares through the streets of the Egyptian cities. They are selling the fruit that they have reared and cared for; unlike the London coster with his strident cry, these Egyptian boys offer you fruit that they really love. Of course, when talking of Egyptian boys, one cannot help thinking of the mule and donkey boys, for Egypt is overrun with donkeys and the attendant boys, and anyone who knows the country at all cannot help noticing this great feature of street life. One invariably sees these white-shirted lads trying to induce their donkeys to perform some feat for which they have not the slightest inclination. For instance, an Egyptian boy will persuade a mite of a donkey to carry through the streets of Cairo an enormously fat Englishwoman. All one can see of the group is a voluminous back and two tiny staggering legs, with a red-fezzed boy pushing vigorously and steering dexterously at the back. Now, no other boy in the world could induce a donkey to carry such a weight, and certainly no other boy could extort high pay-

ment so cleverly. One can quite picture the scene when the end of the journey is reached—how the small rascal, covered with the fluff of brown-haired beasts, with wild ejaculations will compassionately feel his donkey's limbs, open its eyes, and then, clasping his brown hands together, fall on his knees and wail pathetically, "My donkey die! my donkey die!" in such a way that the old lady feels bound to pay him double fare or suffer pangs of conscience ever after, so dramatic and real is the pantomime.

There are children everywhere in Egypt. On the great water-wheels they cuddle up close to their fathers. Often they are to be seen in companionship with a bullock and a camel, running in and out of ruins, clinging on to anything and everything, and never coming to harm. You see them, scarcely more than five years old, trotting about the busy streets, trying to force a way, and gazing with all their souls in their eyes at the brilliant booths in the market-place, the fruit and cakes, and new red-and-yellow slippers, finally spending their last coin in toothsome sago-puddings, full of almonds and sticks of sugar-cane.

Egyptian children never seem to overcome their inborn laziness. They do not care to learn, though

SEWING

EGYPT

lessons in the history of Egypt are given by clever tutors, gratis, at street corners. Children have every opportunity of receiving a sound education; yet they learn only to read and write, and that indifferently.

All this concerns the children of the lower classes. The children of the aristocracy are not quite so interesting; but, nevertheless, they are attractive. Both classes are lazy, and the children of the aristocracy are pampered. The girls lead lazy lives; half their time is spent in scented baths, smoking cigarettes and sipping coffee brewed from Nile water,—and the care and thought taken over this coffee!

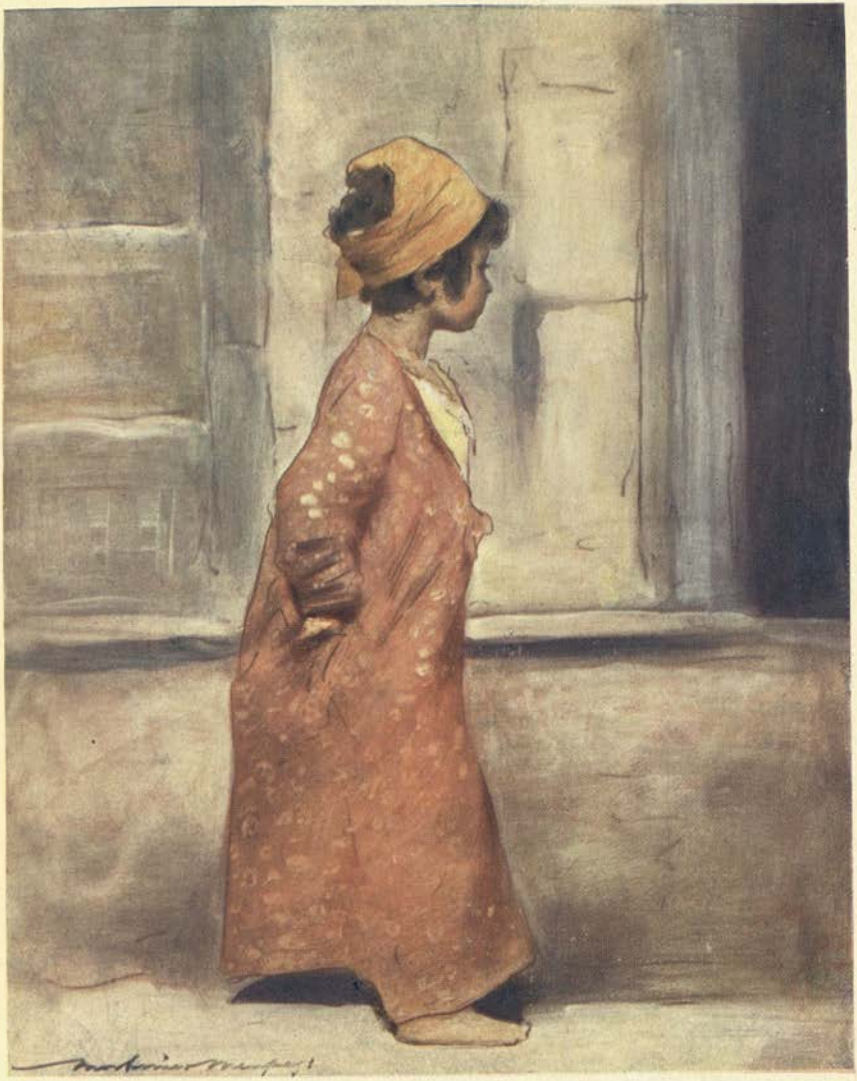
Egyptian fairy stories are mystical, dreamy, full of sentiment, romance, and lofty ideas. There are delightful professional story-tellers, and children make up for one another fantastical tales that would amaze most Europeans.

Egyptians are born romancers: every incident in their lives is developed into romance. They are also extremely superstitious. For instance, a mother, or perhaps a sister, will carry a new-born baby down to the Nile in the hope that it may point one tiny finger at, smile at, or show some sign of interest in, a crocodile, this being popularly supposed to be the luckiest possible omen.

Some of their beliefs are not so æsthetic as one might wish them to be. The lemon superstition does not appeal to the Westerner. Every Egyptian carries a lemon concealed about his person, and smears it, at a certain spot, on every temple he passes. The place naturally becomes thick with microbes from the lemons carried there in the pockets of dirty children; but the pulp thus rubbed on the wall is supposed to cure any disease, however terrible. And I have been wondering of late if perhaps there might not be some particle of truth in this theory. Such an extraordinary combination of microbes gathered together might battle with the germs of the disease, and eventually win the day.

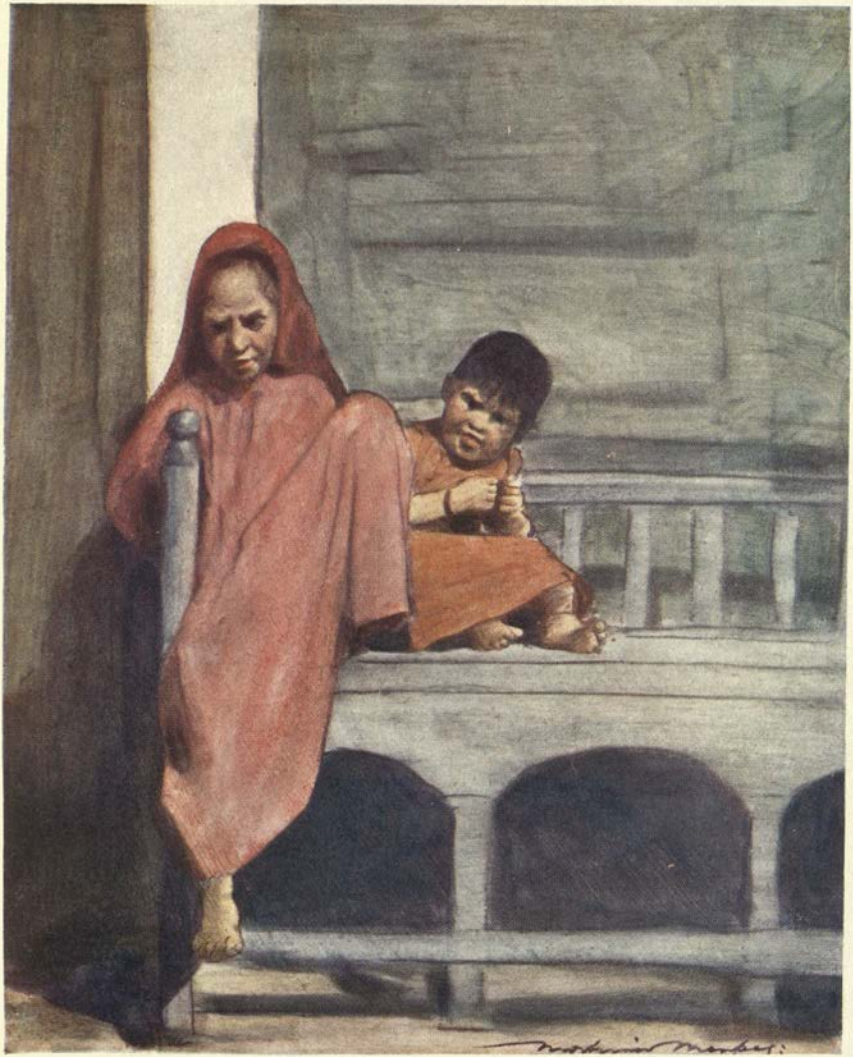
A BY-STREET IN CAIRO

EGYPT



TWO IN A CORNER

EGYPT



THE MID-DAY MEAL

EGYPT

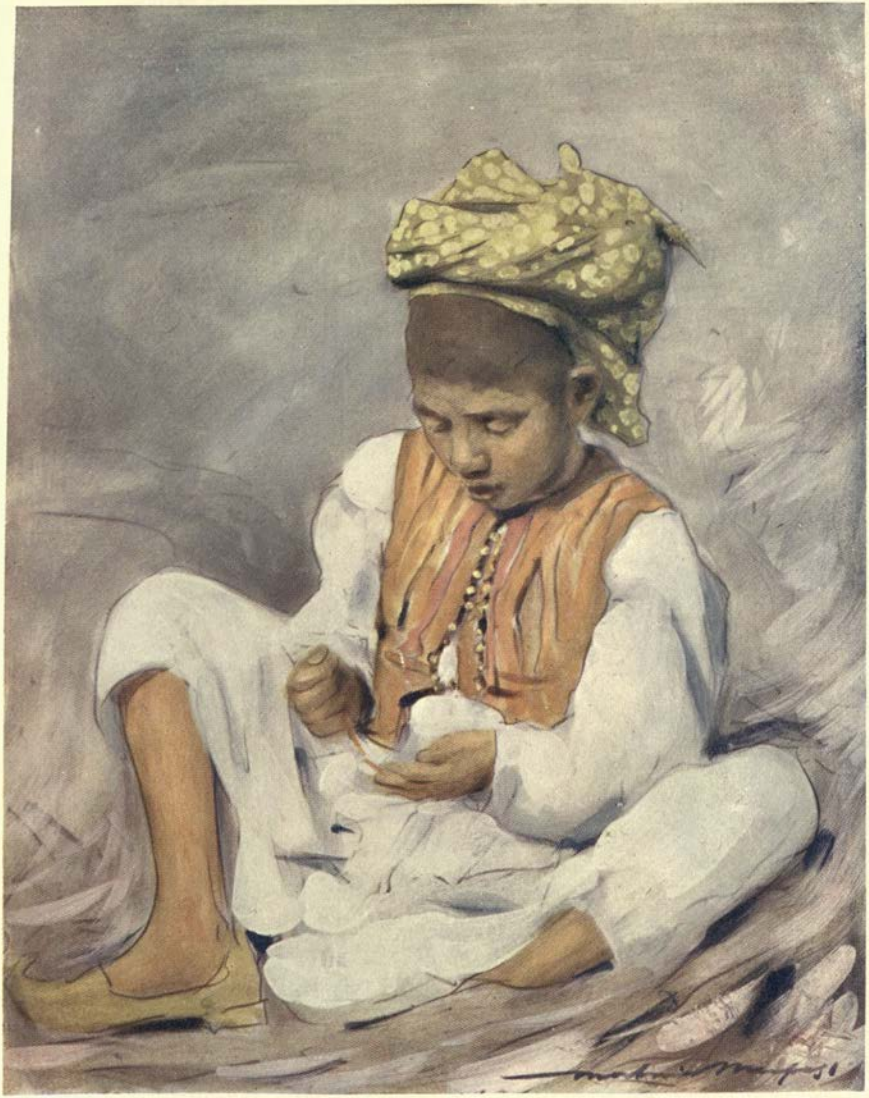
FACING THE EAST

EGYPT

INDIAN CHILDREN

THREADING BEADS

INDIA



INDIAN CHILDREN

THERE are many different shades of babies in India — babies golden, babies olive-tinted, babies nearly black,—with skins beautifully smooth and transparent.

When a Hindoo baby is born, a shell is sounded, so that friends and relations may know of the glad event.

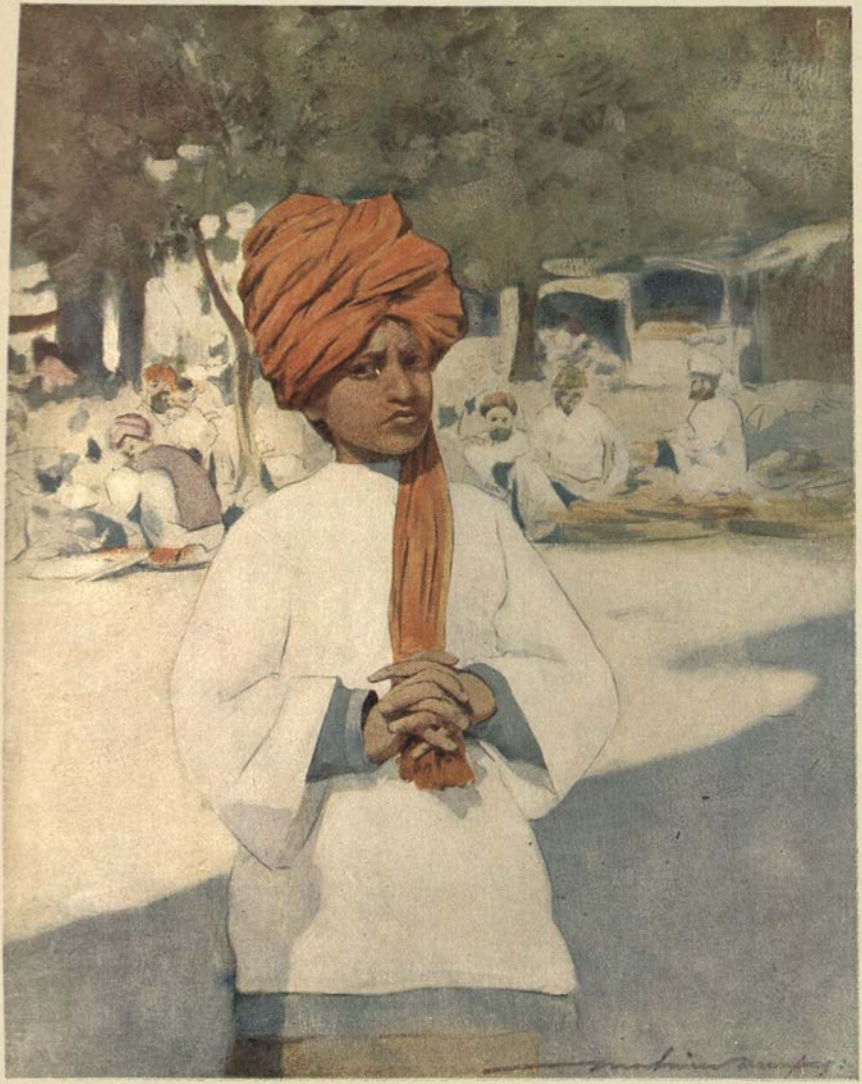
How glad all the friends are when baby is a boy! They crowd round his room door and make offerings to Shasthi, the patron goddess of children,—offerings of rice, fruit, sweets, clothes, milk, and all sorts of good things. All the children in the neighbourhood are given presents of rice and peas and sweets, and in the evening they gather together and beat the door with small sticks, shouting, "Let the child rest in peace on the lap of its mother!" Then a palm-leaf and pen and ink are brought into baby's room, and the god of fate comes, and the

child's destiny is written on his forehead. It is an exciting time. His life is crowded with ceremony from the moment he opens his eyes. For the first few weeks he receives a great deal of attention and a great many visits. His father comes to see him, places a gold coin in his hand, and invokes a blessing on his head. If he were only a little older, how he would appreciate that coin! Then an astrologer tells his fate, writing it all down in a book, from the exact minute of his birth to the last hour of his life. If the future is gloomy, all the family fall on their knees and pray to the god of fate, trying to persuade him by costly offerings to change his mind. I believe he almost invariably does.

When baby is six months old his head is shaved and he is given boiled rice to eat, and dressed up in silk for the first time. Then all the friends of the family come round to look at him, and, if they approve, offer presents. He is then called after the name of some god, for his parents fondly suppose that by continually mentioning his name the god will be flattered, and inclined to think kindly of the child. After all these ceremonies are over, baby is allowed to run about just as he likes for the next four or five

AT DELHI

INDIA



years, in many cases with no clothing at all beyond a small charm tied round his waist by a string. He is an emaciated, solemn person, with light brown skin, large eyes, soft dark hair, and an abnormally high forehead: an intelligent, sensible child, bright, active, fond of play and sport, spending all his time out of doors in the broiling sun, until his body becomes dusky or almost black. His life is somewhat monotonous. For weeks and months together there is the same commonplace routine; every day of his life he bathes in the river, which cleanses his soul as well as his body, and he washes his clothes, provided he has any, and lays them out to dry on the bank. He lives in a hut of mud and matting, with a thatched roof and lattice-work windows, and eats nothing but rice and vegetables and hot spices, all without a fork or spoon—in fact, he looks upon the use of a spoon as a dirty habit. Before eating he is careful to wash his hands, and to draw a circle round about him; and if any boy of a different caste steps within it, he throws away the food, and even breaks up the dishes. If he meets another boy, and that boy is an equal, he will touch his forehead with the palm of his right hand; but if he meets a superior, he bends low, as though to

touch the other's foot, and then slowly straightens himself.

The Brahmin boy gets the best of it. A Sudras boy thinks it an honour to put the dust from a young Brahmin's foot upon his head. Then the son of a Brahmin is allowed to wear the poitra, the sacred thread. This is simply a few pieces of thread worn round the neck and hanging from the left shoulder. But the honour and the glory of it! It is a sign of spiritual aristocracy. No peer of the realm is prouder of his birth than is the poorest child Brahmin in Bengal. No sovereign values his crown more highly than the high-caste boy his piece of thread. He is respected, worshipped, by boys of lower caste; he has the right to understand the Vedas, that most sacred book, the knowledge of which forms a passport to the highest bliss in heaven. A low-caste boy may hope to obtain this privilege, it is true; but not until hundreds of thousands of years have passed over his head. A Brahmin boy, like the king, can do no wrong—he is forgiven everything. When he is between the ages of nine and fifteen he goes to his mother and father and tells them that he is about to become a religious beggar. They receive this announcement with prayers and protestations that

DISCONTENT

INDIA

he shall do nothing of the kind, and after he has been persuaded for some time he gives in gracefully to their will. This is merely a farce. The Brahmin boy never intended doing anything of the kind. However, he has to do penance for his sins in another way. For three days he may not see the sun, and must spend his time in learning sacred writings. On the fourth day he goes to bathe, repeats some prayers, and then goes home to live as before. This ceremony is called a second birth, and henceforth the child is looked upon as a sacred personage. He looks upon God as a supreme being, without beginning and without end, able to know all things, all-powerful, and present everywhere. He is a solemn, stolid little being, with not much fun in him. He knows no such thing as humour: to him life is very solemn indeed, and affords no occasion for laughter.

When a child is nobly born, he is arrayed like a splendid orchid. He walks with the most dignified carriage imaginable; there is a certain air of mastery in the pose of the proud little head, and a certain cruel expression about his mouth and eyes. He drives through the streets in a carriage drawn by seven horses, accompanied by his gorgeous retinue,—a rainbow pageant, jewelled elephants,

nobles and warriors with long beards and curving swords, his cousins and relatives, running by his side. He goes home to elaborately ornamented saloons, a house of fairy-like structure, with terraces, pavilions, and balconies. His bedroom is a product of the genius of skilled men working in costly materials.

Quite different is the lot of the humble Hindu boy loitering in the streets of the crowded bazaars amid the bustle of natives with their asses and waggons—a boy with a half-naked body and piercing black eyes, loaded with bracelets and armlets so heavy that he can scarcely support their weight. In the summer he wears no clothes at all, and in the winter is anointed with cocoanut oil. One's imagination follows these little brown figures trotting day after day over their native earth in those wonderful hot plains. They need little to eat, little to wear. They have a marvellous power of finding their way about and communicating with one another: they seem to have the means of some strange mental telegraphy.

When he is four years old the Hindu boy's time of idleness and happy freedom is over. His father then consults an astrologer as to which would be

A YOUNG WORKER

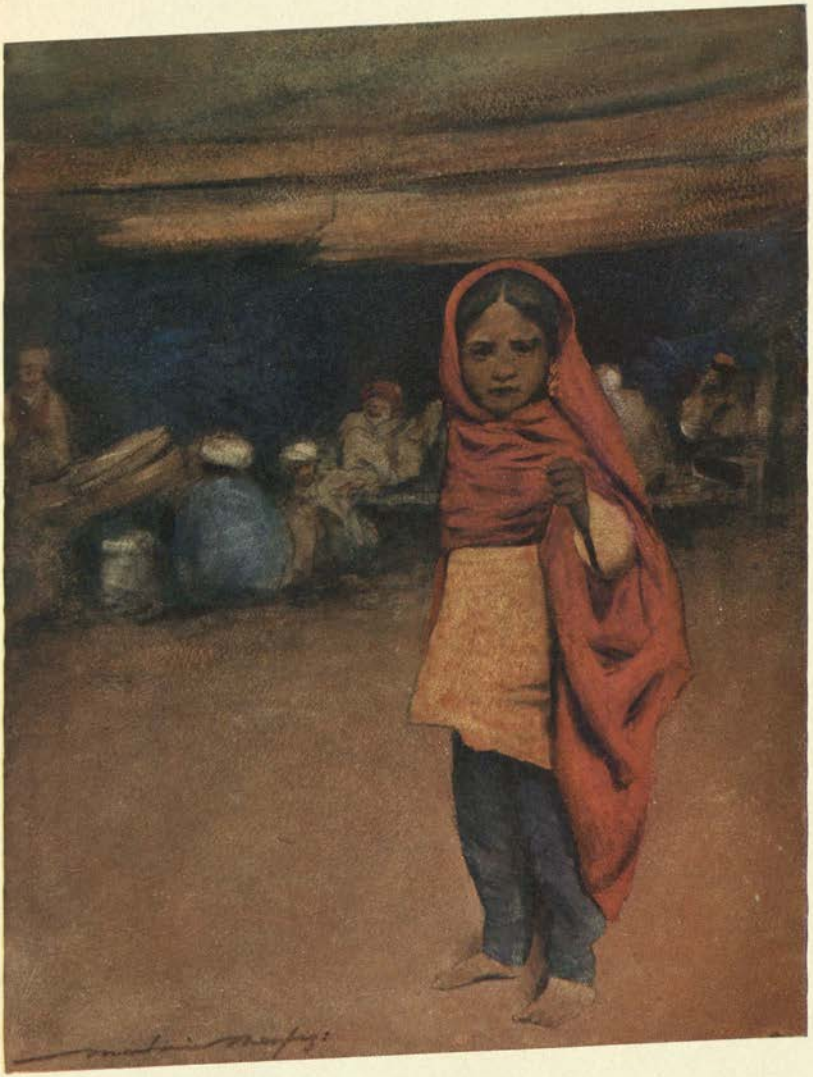
INDIA

the luckiest day to send the son to school. When the date has been fixed, he is given a bath, his very best clothes are put on, and he is taken to pay a visit to the temple and to offer up sacrifices to the god of learning, praying that in his school life he may become learned and industrious. Then he is taken to school, and a period of rigid discipline begins. If he is the first boy to arrive in the morning he is given one stroke of the cane across his back, and each boy as he comes gets an added stroke, the last boy receiving an abundance. How fatigued that schoolmaster must be! If a child is very late indeed, he is made to stand on one leg for an hour, or hold his arms straight out before him, or hold a brick high in the air. For every new lesson he learns he must give the master a present.

One of the first things that a Hindu boy is taught is to honour his mother and father; and to be very polite to all the gods and goddesses, for they hate him bitterly, it is suspected, and have the power, it is supposed, to make his life unhappy. When he is admitted into the fellowship of the Hindu system, he is bathed, clothed in spotless linen, and taught a text, a string of words that a child can easily remember. But if he repeats these

words to anyone, fearful penalties must he pay. Sometimes there are holidays on great festivals. For instance, there is the feast of Sarasvati, the goddess of learning. This amiable person sits on a water-lily and plays a flute, while every schoolboy comes to visit her, dressed in yellow, and presents his inkstand, clean and empty, to be consecrated by the goddess. She must be very popular among boys, I should imagine. Then, there is the Brother Festival, when all the brothers go round and pay polite visits to their sisters. But this festival is not looked forward to with such universal joy as the Feast of Cakes. This comes after the harvest, and for three days there is nothing to do but play games and eat cakes. The great feast of the year, for which everyone saves up his pocket-money and new clothes are bought, is the Durjah Purjah. Durjah is a terrible person to look at, being possessed of three eyes and ten arms. She is exceedingly warlike and very much feared; therefore she receives a great deal of attention and flattery. Everyone is anxious to please her. At the end of the festival each child must keep a souvenir in memory of her visit, wrapping it up carefully to be treasured all his life, even if it is only one of the leaves of a

THE END OF THE DAY



flower he has offered her. Then each boy takes a small image of her out in a boat, and with much music and shouting throws it into the river. He pretends to be very much grieved at parting with her, and runs to the temple to be sprinkled with holy water and to drink a glass of hemp in order to drown his sorrow. Such is the awe that the great and wicked personage inspires!

A Hindu boy is married at sixteen to a little girl of eight. He does not see her until everything has been settled by the parents and the matchmaker. Then he goes with a procession to her house, bringing presents with him; but if he should meet a snake on the way, he turns back and waits for a more auspicious occasion. Crowds follow him along the streets, shouting "The bridegroom comes!"; and as he reaches the home of his bride, a troop of girls under six run out to meet him and bring him into the house. All day long there is great feasting; but the bride and bridegroom must not partake. In the temple the bride is lifted up on a level with the bridegroom's face, a piece of silk is thrown over their heads, and for the first time they are allowed to look at one another. Then their hands are tied together with flowers and the barber declares

them married, pronouncing a curse upon anyone who dares to say anything against them.

Hindu boys love to watch the acrobats and jugglers; it is their chief amusement. How surprised an English boy would be to see a seed sprinkled with water grow into a mango-tree before his very eyes, getting higher and higher every minute, until at last the fruit was distributed among the audience! How it would astonish him to see a needle stuck point-uppermost in the sand, and a woman advance walking on her hands, and, slowly stooping down, lift it between her eyelids; also to see snakes, venomous cobras, coil round a man's arm and kiss his tongue; to hear an educated bull answer questions; and many more wonderful and inexplicable things that the Hindu boy can enjoy every day of his life!

You can always find out the religion of a boy in India by his house. It shows itself in everything about him — the way the house is built, the kind of food he eats, the clothing he wears,— everything he does. The Hindu boy believes implicitly in the transmigration of souls. He believes that if he is good he will be changed into a cow or a sheep, or some pleasant, amiable animal; but if he is naughty he will be transformed into a

IN THE SUN

INDIA

mouse, or a rat, or a fly. He looks upon Benares as the most sacred place in the world. Benares, he thinks, is eighty thousand steps nearer heaven than any other place, and he would like to be brought there to die. When he goes to Benares he always visits the monkey temple, where hundreds of sacred monkeys are kept; and the golden temple, to see the well of knowledge, half-filled with dead flowers and rice. He never forgets to have his head shaved; for he believes that with each hair that falls into the holy water he will get a million years in heaven. Every child may go to heaven if he is rich enough to take a journey to Allahabad.

The Wassali boy lives in the country. He is taught to steal blankets from under sleeping men. Is he caught? Yes, sometimes; but try to catch an eel, and when you have him try to keep him, and you may have some idea of the difficulty.

There are four rules, very simple, by which a Wassali boy's life is regulated. Don't be idle: tie up the cow, bring the water in, and sweep out the house. A beautifully simple code of life this. What a difference from that of the English boy, with his European civilisation! A pretty picture comes to one's mind's eye of a graceful little figure,

bowing to my lord and lady, as he calls his parents, on returning from a journey, bowing profoundly before them, and pretending to shake the dust off his head. When a Wassali boy goes to school there are three stages of learning to write: first, the letter in the sound; second, to write it with a sharp needle on a palm leaf; and, third, to write it on a green plantain leaf. A boy's great ambition is to become a Maghadas when he grows up,—a man whose business about an Eastern court is to wake the king in the morning. He goes to the royal bedside every day and tells the monarch what time it is; he repeats the names of the gods, making omens, and dwelling on the beauty of the morning; in a word, he tells the king civilly to get up, and not be lazy. When a Wassali boy dies, he is burnt immediately and his ashes are thrown into the river. All boys, they say, go to the great tiger-killer that lives in the jungle. How alive these jungles, steaming in the heat of the tropics, must be to many a savage boy,—alive with the ghosts of comrades, the boys he has loved and the boys he has wronged!

What does an Indian girl do? When she is born, they say the gods must be angry. No joy-bells are rung, no one is glad; no one is sorry

when she dies, except perhaps her mother, for mothers are much the same all the world over.

How does she occupy herself all day? She dresses her mother's hair—plaits it up, and takes it down again. She has no lessons to learn; but she listens to stories told her by her elders, and when she is six years old she is taught religion. What does she pray about principally? She prays to Siva for a good, kind husband, and sprinkles the goddess's head with holy water. She confides all her secrets to the wooden ear. She tells Siva that she wants to have a prince for her husband; that she wants to be very beautiful and very good, so that he may love her. She also tells Siva that she wants to have seven clever little boys and two pretty little girls; and lastly, that she wishes to die on the banks of the Ganges. All this from a mite of six!

When it is time for the child to be married, which is usually at eight years old, the professional matchmaker calls to inspect her and see if she be worthy of her young lord's acceptance. This is the greatest day of her life, so much is at issue; and she realises it, too. She always keeps the matchmaker waiting; but at last she appears, sparkling in jewels from her neck to her toes,

and rustling with silk and brocade. A gorgeous little figure, but how pathetic! Then the inexorable matchmaker looks her all over and begins to question her; she must talk to him, and walk before him, and show him a sample of her reading and writing. And very probably she has never even seen a man before. Then for two weeks the child is kept like a piece of fragile porcelain: she is fed up and cosseted, and bathed in perfumes, while her feet and hands are dyed every day.

When the important time arrives, she is loaded with as many jewels as she can carry and taken to the temple. Then the ceremony begins.

Six times she is carried slowly round the bridegroom, until her head spins. And then—this she is very proud of—he fastens round her neck a little gold brooch, with the figure of a god on it. This is called a tali, and takes the place of our wedding-ring. Bitter is the grief of the bride if she should break or lose her tali: better would it be for her that she had never been born. One evening, after she has been married, her husband leads her to the door of her house and shows her the pole star, which is looked upon as the sign of faithfulness.

The most terrible ordeal for her is the time

when she must go and visit her mother-in-law. The baby bride, for reasons best known to herself, looks upon this personage with awe and fear. Tremblingly she is taken in her palka to the house; tremblingly she makes her obeisance, and repeats all the polite sentences that she has been taught so carefully to say. She must know the right moment to open her mouth; for soon the mother-in-law will advance towards her with a pot of honey and pour some of the contents down her throat and ears, telling her at the same time to be as sweet as honey in her future life, doing faithfully everything her mother-in-law commands, and always speaking respectfully to her. Honey is very good; but when it is given to you by a dreaded mother-in-law and poured down your ears, one does not entertain quite the usual feeling for it.

After this ceremony the newly-married maid goes back to her own people, and lives her own life in peace for a few years. She is careful to be very good, because if she does not behave well her mother threatens to send her back to her mother-in-law. When she is twelve or fourteen years old, she is bound to go and live in her husband's home, whether she likes it or not.

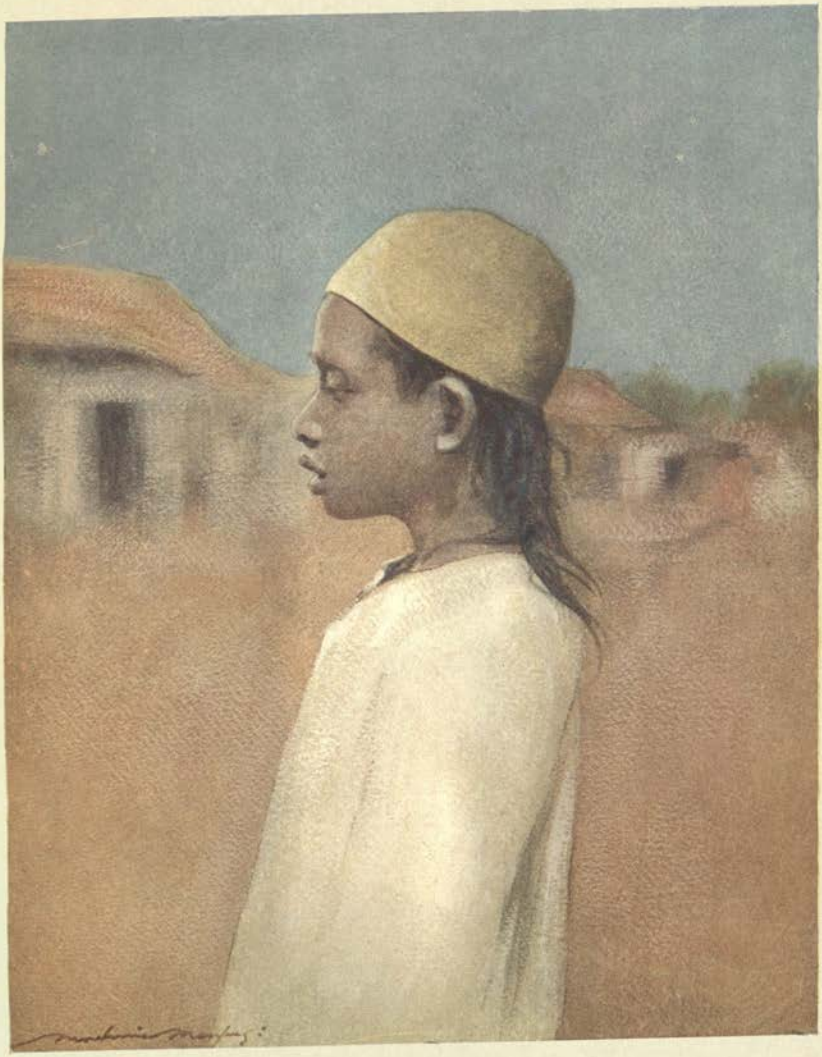
HIS BEST BLUE BEADS

COLOMBO

CINGALESE CHILDREN

EARLY MORNING

COLOMBO



CINGALESE CHILDREN

WHAT a splendid country for a child is Ceylon! When the sun shines all day long and the vegetation is aglow in tropical luxuriance, how can he help being happy, as happy as the parrot chattering in the tree? He leaves his mud hut nestling in the grassy mountain ridge every morning, and trudges to school in his white comboy and pink jacket; he climbs steep hillsides, and goes over rice-fields, where wild buffaloes saunter and beautiful Indian bullocks with cream-coloured bodies feed; some parts of his way are under great trees, and others are in bright sunshine. A white mud erection, with wooden pillars and brown cocoanut-leafed roof,—such is the appearance of this temple of learning.

There are all sorts and conditions of babies in Ceylon—babies of different shades, and babies of different natures. You can take your choice: they

are all equally delightful, all equally naughty. What of the Tamil baby coolie? He is nearly black, with long, smooth, well-oiled hair, screwed up into a little knot behind; a well-fed, hard-working person with remarkably thin legs, which hold up his rotund body admirably. Personally, I am rather partial to this baby,—he is so shiny and so fearless. Would you believe it? Baby Tamil is afraid of only three things in all the wide world —getting his head wet, meeting a wild elephant, and encountering the devil in the jungle at night! His courage cannot but be admired. Baby Tamil's home is a small, clay-lined, chimneyless room, where the atmosphere is thick with smoke. A more miserable habitation I have never seen. But baby does not mind; not he: he is proud of his home; to him it is a lovely dwelling. There he lives and thrives and spends all his life. He is very happy there; he eats rice and vegetables, and grows enormously fat; but his legs, for some reason or other, always remain thin. All day long he wanders about among the tea-bushes, absolutely, gloriously naked, save for a few gold ornaments. Sometimes he plays cards, and squats for hours on his calves on the sunlit ground under the banana trees. In the morning he has

WATCHING THE RACE

COLOMBO

a bowl of rice for breakfast, which he eats outside his house. The hens, tired of searching for meals from the sun-baked clay, cluster round him and fight for the rice. Baby has hard work to beat them off with his spoon; but he never thinks of calling for help; he knows that he must fight his own battles now, as through life, alone.

Then, there is the Chetti baby, delightful in his way, as all babies are, but to my mind not quite so attractive as some. He is tall for his age, with long, smooth-cut features, and a pate as bare as the palm of your hand. This baby does not romp and play and laugh like his Tamil cousin: he is set in sterner mould. A silent, creepy little man is he, moving about in a long flowing white cloak, uncommunicative and stealthy. The Cingalese boy always appeals to me: he knows how to climb a cocoanut tree better than anyone else in the world, tying his little feet together and swarming up the slippery trunk like a caterpillar. And doesn't he know how to sail a catamaran!

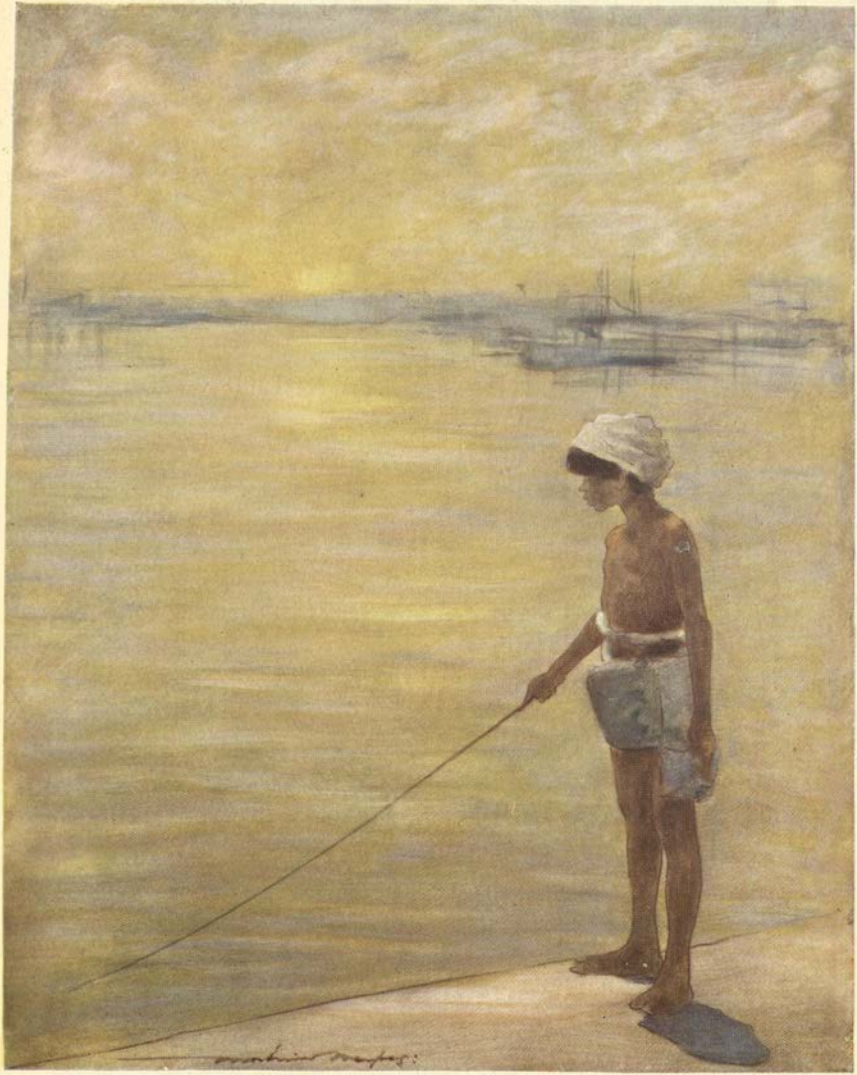
The Gemmer baby has a splendid time. He lives in a temporary house on poles, looking like a dolls' house, and roofed in with cocoanut leaves. All day long his father seeks for gems in the

water, and baby sits and watches. What an exciting career is his, and what fun it is to dangle his legs down in the cool water, and watch while father fills his basket with mud and sand, and shakes and shakes with his eyes fixed on the work! At any moment he may find untold wealth. But how baby and his father hate the rain! At the first few spots, even if they have just discovered a fortune, they will drop everything and fly off to the cover of their home. The Cingalese boy learns very early in life how to drive bullocks; he goads them on by sounds like the grunting of pigs; but he is rather cruel, for when the poor beasts are too tired to go any farther, the urchin knows exactly how to twist their tails until they do.

He makes good use of life, this Cingalese boy, and the gifts that God has given him. Every limb in his body he puts to practical use: he knows how to use his toes every bit as nimbly as we do our fingers. He perches himself for hours on logs and rails and steps just like a frog, basking in the sunshine and chewing betel, the green leaf of the pepper vine. This to him is bliss. And such a pastime should satisfy any reasonable human being. In a country where the air is laden with golden particles, and the

FISHING

COLOMBO



yellow rays shoot between the trunks and touch objects in detached patches, where the shadows are large and sombre, where palm groves extend all the way as far as eye can see, where delicious stretches of yellow sand abound, and sienna-tinted paths lead through lush grass, surely it is enough to sit and wonder and admire. The Cingalese boy is wise in his generation!

KASHMIR CHILDREN

A STOLID SITTER

CASHMERE

KASHMIR CHILDREN

A MEMBER of the Alpine Club in London said to me one day,—"I thought I knew what grandeur and greatness and graveness meant, climbing as much as I have done in Europe; but when I went up to try and climb the Himalayan mountains I felt that all I knew before was as nought; I felt that, in the immortal words of Wordsworth,

'For the power of hills is on thee, as was witnessed through thine eye
Then, when old Helvellyn won thee to confess their majesty.'

It is impossible to dwell all day long among these eternal snows without their having some influence on character. Therefore, in talking of the children of Kashmir, we see what has made them the somewhat reserved little folk they are. A great road leads up to their home, the wide vale of Kashmir. It is inclosed by mountain ranges, and lies at such a height above the sea-level

that the climate there is entirely different from any other Indian climate, and more free from cold than most valleys. What do they look like, these children? Handsome, distinctly so. The pretty curved mouth, the wide, straight, high forehead, the finely-shaped head, the square-cut brow, makes "mother's darling" a delight to the pretty woman who is wrapped up in her firstborn. How do they dress? Simply. Simplicity is a characteristic of mountain races. They all wear short pyjamas, a long, loose, large-sleeved gown, and some sort of a skull-cap. Those who have work to do hitch this gown up and fasten it round the waist with a "cummerbund." I have often seen the children run back to mother's knee to be "hitched" up again. Are they going on a journey, mother and son? She will wear herself, and put on the boy, funny leggings consisting of a bandage six inches wide and four yards long, wound round the ankle up to just below the knee, and then fastened by a long string. Don't they love, like all children, to undo that string, take off the bandage, and play with it! Even the very pretty girls (for those of five and six in Kashmir hold their own for beauty),—even they will love to cast away the heavy gown and bandage, and play in

AT SOPOOR

CASHMERE

their woollen under-suits. All wool? Yes: too near the eternal snows for cottons to be of any use. One custom they have which is the delight of Kashmir children of all ages and all classes—a custom which, as they grow older, forms their chief comfort. I allude to the 'kangri,' as they call it: it is a small earthen pot, about six inches across, inclosed in basketwork, containing live charcoal. This they hold beneath their great gowns, against their little bodies, when they are seated on the floor, and the heat from it warms them through and through. It is a pretty sight to see the baby toddlers being taught by their elders to hold the kangri "right side up." They are a comfortable people, these Kashmiri. I have found from personal experience that those who live among the high hills always are. Your excitable, hysterical man or woman, who talks hygiene and is always wanting to live in a draught, is sure to be the product of a big city. No: our Kashmir lads and lasses have their warm, comfortable nursery for the winter, and a balcony sheltered by the low sloping gable roof, with posts, which it is the boys' delight either to swarm up or to slide down. Apple, cherry, mulberry, and walnut trees grow around. One sees the same child nature revealing itself all the world over.

What is the good of an apple tree unless it can be climbed and the fruit eaten before it is ripe? Sour grapes never set the teeth of a real child on edge. It is reserved for our later days to find that out. All healthy, well-conditioned boys love best the half-ripe fruits, which they have had a rare and radiant climb to reach.

There is one thing that every Kashmir boy must learn to do. He must become a very efficient driver; for there is only one really good road through Kashmir, and the mountain ponies are very rough and wild, being just as happy standing on their heads as on their hoofs. The great delight of the Kashmir boy is to help in the construction of his father's floating garden. All gardens are a dream of delight to boys and girls; but when it means not only making a garden but also a floating one, how much greater is their joy! The father of our Kashmir boy says to him one morning, "Come with me to where the water is shallow. Last year I planted some trees and reeds. This morning we will throw in some twigs and small stones." Father and son go to work many a long morning, adding small stones and twigs to the garden; and very fascinating is the planting of the leaves and reeds to help to make the soil. Backwards and forwards,

AN ARMFUL

CASHMERE

under the brilliant blue sky, with the pearly ring of the great mountains behind them, go father and son, toiling, rejoicing. After many weeks comes a day when the father thinks that the garden is strong enough to bear his boy, who, delighting in being monarch of all he surveys, spends a happy morning on his father's floating kingdom. What matter if he does slip through the soil to the river beneath? He can swim like a water-vole. After a pleasant gambol, however, work must be gone on with; and then days come when the soil is put on and the garden is advanced enough to bear father's weight, and be towed along or moved about between strong poles. How magnificent they look as the season advances, these floating gardens, filled with vegetables and flowers! Father and son are well rewarded for their pains, notwithstanding that, from the religious point of view of their countrymen, they are handling what is unclean, and are consequently outcasts from society. How the small boys of Kashmir love their watery homes; how they work in the rice plantations! Little we think, when we order our rice puddings, of the labour that caused them to be put upon our plates. When rice plants begin to grow they must be weeded, and no joke is this weeding, for rice plants

have enemies in the shape of weeds or false rice, and that means paddling about in cold water and mud, looking at each plant. Weeding has to be learnt early in life, as it requires great delicacy of touch to find out the difference between bad and good rice; and children must learn to walk across the rice fields on stilts.

Kashmir is a country of curious trades. Suppose that we want some rugs. We must leave the little rice boys and their fathers, to tread on sure soil once more, and visit a carpet manufactory, where the wool is wound by children off their toes. Still, in between the windings, little limbs can kick, little dark faces can smile and nod, and fun is present everywhere. Then visitors will come and look round; and if the beautiful patterns, handed down from centuries, have been well copied, there is a holiday for everybody—a swim in the water in summer time, fairy stories told round the charcoal pots if winter is about, berries and fruit as a reward for toil.

Kashmir children are born amid a wealth of colour—colour is everywhere. Flowers, the most beautiful in the world, grow about them. Roses, such as we never dream of here, hang in clusters, ready to be gathered by the dainty fingers of

SITTING STILL

CASHMERE

Kashmir girls, and made into essence worth large sums a bottle.

What an everlasting interest to children through all the centuries are the wonderful old Hindoo temples, with their marvellous stories of gods and devils, sculptured by hands long dead! Still the Kashmir mother, as she has done through all ages, cuddles her baby in her arms and points out the devils and griffins, telling him to be very good, or else—who knows?—one of them may come and fetch him away.

Does the little Kashmir boy or girl want to go mulberry-picking, notwithstanding mother's warning not to wander away alone? Ah, how the children's hearts beat when they do go alone! Possibly some one else has come alone too—the big black bear of Kashmir! Fortunately,—for we do not want this chapter to end with a tragedy —the big bear is as fond of mulberries as the boy or the girl; and as he is never roused to ferocity unless attacked, he is too much engaged in "tucking in" to the luscious fruit to pay attention to the children. But what a fright the children get when they catch sight of him as they too are "tucking in"! In fact, that night, when they return home to the evening meal, they

are so preternaturally good that mother soon guesses the reason, and next day the children are not allowed a hairsbreadth away from her side.

Education does not press hardly on these far-away people. Heaven be praised, there are no examinations; yet, like all people who are near the great solemnity of the mountains, they are gifted with a keen natural intelligence, far beyond that of their brothers of the plains. Fools fare badly in Kashmir.

They lead happy lives, the children of this far-away part of the globe, ringed round with the eternal snows and the blue heavens. There are many worse lots than theirs. So good-bye to you, little brown babes of the valleys among the Himalayas!

Only one road to Kashmir, says a great traveller come thence lately; and a very good thing too. Let us keep some portion of this world sacred to silence and sweetness; and may the little figures in their picturesque dresses continue in contentment their flower-strewn pilgrimage through life!

ON THE RIVER JHELUM

CASHMERE

CROSS

CASHMERE

THE POTTER

CASHMERE

BURMESE CHILDREN

STANDING AT ATTENTION

BURMAH

BURMESE CHILDREN

I THINK one could safely say that Burmese children are the happiest and most contented in the world. They are dearly loved by their parents, and the babies return the affectionate love with a reverential tenderness quite beautiful to see. Baby comes into the world full of gladness and rejoicing among people who welcome him with adoration; and ere long he considers himself, as indeed he is, a monarch, an autocrat, entitled to rule his mother's household, and the households of her friends, with an unquestionable sway.

The world seems to have been made for him. And what a jolly place it is! Why, baby may pull the cheroot out of his father's mouth and play with it, roll out of his cradle from sheer mischief, and, when he is older, ravage his neighbour's back-garden, without an angry word or look being directed at him! Burma is a happy

hunting-ground for children, there are so many joys—cool bamboo forests to play in (and, by-the-by, a Burmese child is about the only person who has been known to derive any joy out of those most solemn places), bright-plumaged parrots and butterflies to chase, roses and all kinds of fruit to pick. Then—delightful idea!—all the grown-up people seem to wish for nothing better than to contribute to a child's amusement: they are ready to join in a game at any moment, to fashion a toy or tell a fairy story: they even allow a child free access to every house and garden in the village: and, what English children would appreciate more than anything else, no one in Burma ever says "Don't."

Small wonder that the baby Burman coos and gurgles in his glee all the long, lovely summer days. Sometimes, very rarely, he is scolded, but only when he has committed the enormity of being disrespectful or undutiful to his parents. Even then, he is not smacked or sent to bed supperless, as sometimes happens to little English boys; but, what is far worse, he is punished in such a way as to make him heartily wish he had never been born, punished until he feels utterly insignificant and degraded, and lowers the disobedient

A BABY

BURMAH

little head, so that nothing but a small patch of shaven crown can be seen. Happily, such a disgrace occurs very seldom in the blameless life of a Burman child.

Everything connected with the life of the baby wears a joyous aspect. His very cradle is a thing of beauty, fashioned as it is from rushes or elaborately carved wood, and covered with a heap of gaily-coloured silks. In the eyes of the parents, the playthings and immediate surroundings of the children cannot be too brilliant. All babies naturally love colour — any infant will clap his hands and laugh at the sight of a piece of vermilion, and clamour to possess a shining button or a string of beads;—but the little people of Burma seem to have an exceptional love for bright colouring, more especially gold. I have often seen king baby being carried to the temple on his mother's back, fondly clasping a few sheets of gold leaf in his chubby hands, which he intends to plaster on the much-loved wooden image of his own particular god. The clothing of these small autocrats is indeed kingly, and of the most exquisite colours imaginable — old rose, deepening into blues and purples, yellows and oranges, all blended together

and faded into perfect harmony. No humble white linen shirt is to be found in his infant majesty's wardrobe, but gorgeous silks and jewels. However, when he is quite young, I must admit that baby's apparel is somewhat primitive and simple. Dignity in extreme youth is sacrificed to comfort, and the baby Burman sallies forth into the wide world clothed in nothing but his own pretty brown skin, suitably equipped to splash in and out of warm tropical shower puddles, and build mud castles to his heart's content. A little later in life his parents deem it necessary that he should be clothed, and by observing very closely you can see baby undergoing this chrysalis stage. You will notice a boy who was naked yesterday emerging timidly from his house into the open air to-day, with one string of beads round his neck and two more round his ankles, gazing anxiously up and down the street to see that none of his friends are about. He knows that he is looking ridiculous, dressed up in this fashion, and his face wears much the same sort of bored apologetic expression as that of a dog with a kettle tied to its tail.

Whenever you meet a Burmese baby, whether at home or abroad, clothed or not clothed, he is always tremendously occupied with one thing or

THE STEPS

BURMAH

another. He strikes you as a gentleman of consequence, with plenty of business on hand. Unlike the statuesque Egyptian baby that loves to dream in the sand, baby Burman is extremely alive and active. He doesn't insist on dignity: all he cares about is that he is going to have a good time—that's the grand idea. He finds himself in a very pleasant world, apparently made expressly for him, with plenty to do and see; and he is determined to make the best of things.

Wherever you may go you find a cluster of Burmese children, and always occupied, from the lofty service of sticking gold on a temple god, to climbing in and out of flower-pots in their neighbours' gardens; and really I can imagine nothing prettier than a golden-brown child struggling into a salmon-coloured flower-pot. In fact, one rarely sees a flower-pot in Burma that does not hold a child.

Bravery is considered to be the most desirable and important virtue, and is instilled into the hearts and minds of Burmese boys with great vigour. Baby is taught from his earliest years to be brave and to bear pain like a Stoic. Before most European babies are able to stand alone the baby Burman is trusted to walk and crawl at will along

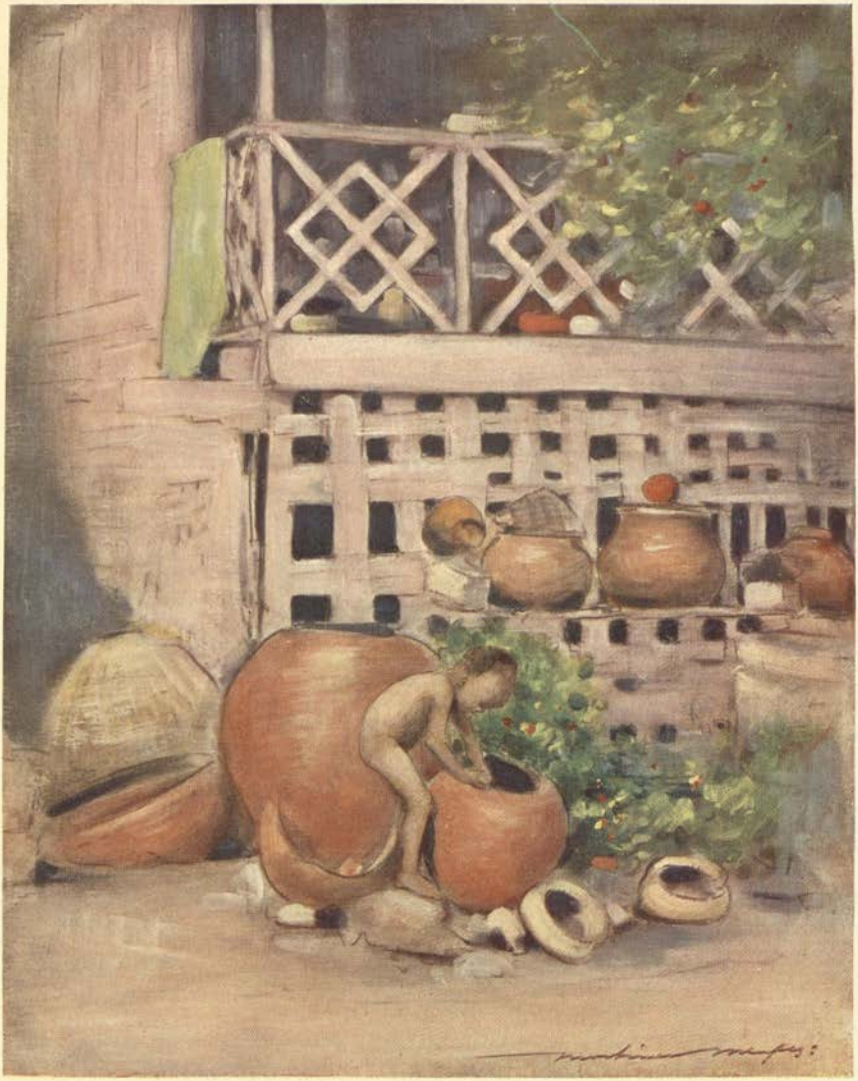
a small platform several feet above the ground, and sometimes above the water. Then, at the age of ten, all Burmese boys are tattooed from neck to knee, a painful process, lasting sometimes for whole weeks, during which period neither a sigh nor a moan must escape the young sufferer, who, if he flinched once, would be considered by his acquaintances for the rest of his life a poltroon and a coward.

All Burmese boys and girls smoke: it is no uncommon occurrence to see a very young child clasping a huge cheroot in his mouth, and puffing away apparently with all the enjoyment of an habitual smoker.

Peg-tops, kite-flying, and butterfly-catching are favourite boys' sports, and the men join in them every bit as enthusiastically as the children; but the great game, the one to which they look forward, that which appeals to them most of all, is boat-racing. There is no Burmese child, however young, who does not enjoy this sport. I have seen toddlers of three screaming themselves ill, as all Burmans are by nature enthusiastic and full of emotion; when once the boats are off and away, the stamping and cheering from the river banks is deafening.

QUAINT PLAYTHINGS

BURMAH



Bicycles are now becoming the vogue in Burma, and mothers and fathers pinch themselves in order to purchase these expensive things for their little ones.

Burma reminds me to a very great extent of Japan. As in Japan, the children are the young blossoms of the country; and, as in Japan, they are very tenderly treated. Infinite care is taken to rear them properly: every instinct and tendency is watched attentively: parents are constantly reproving and guiding, suppressing incipient bad habits with the gentlest authority.

On every possible occasion in Burma a festival is given: any excuse is welcome that will give the dearly-loved little ones pleasure, and afford an opportunity of adding to their honour. Whenever a baby is born there is always a festival; when his head is washed for the first time there is another festival; and the cutting of the first tooth, the forming of that downy fluff called by courtesy hair, the first laugh, the first few words, the first step—each and every important event of this kind is celebrated in sumptuous fashion by a festival.

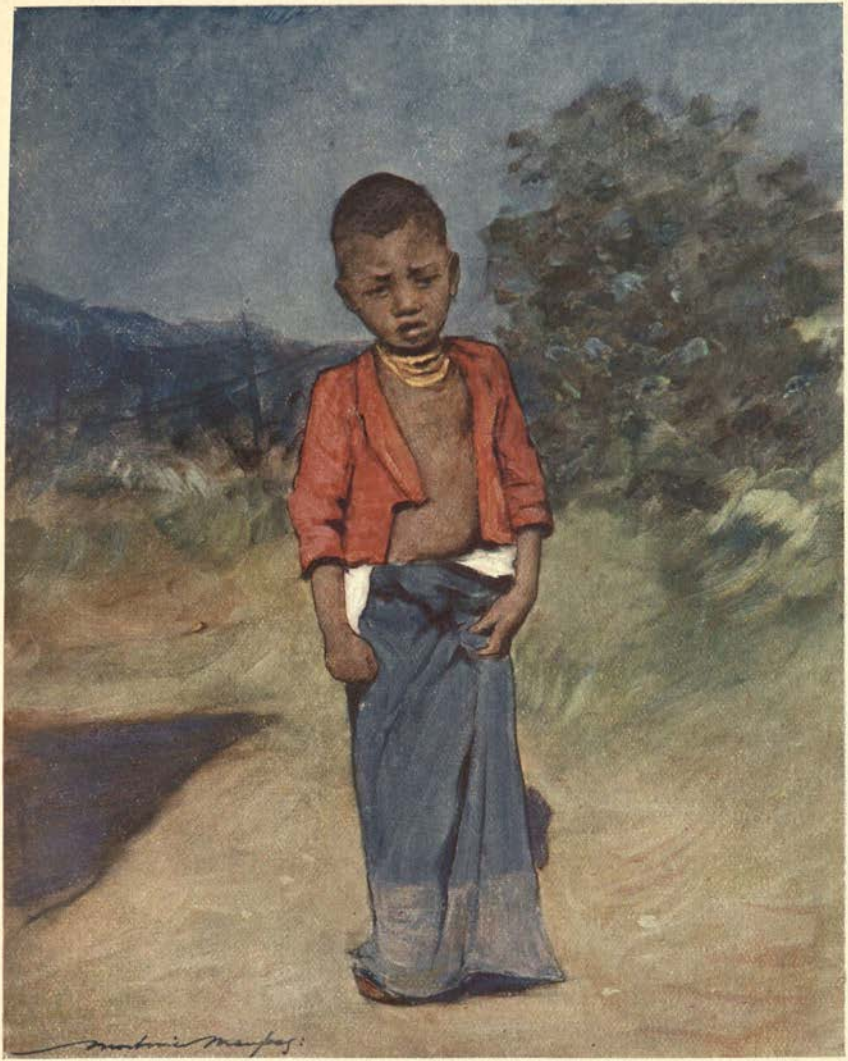
The Burmese baby girl leads much the same kind of life as her brother, and wears very much the

same kind of garments; and, except on festive occasions, when her face is powdered, her hair elaborately coiled, and her arms bedecked with jewels, she is allowed to run wild and do just as she pleases. Soon there comes the eventful day when her ears are pierced, and she leaves childhood behind her to enter society: then there is a very ceremonious festival indeed. From that day onward the Burmese young lady begins to model her life on that of a flower. In appearance and movement she strives to resemble a heavy-headed flower swaying in the breeze. She tries in every possible way to attract and captivate the Burmese youths; and she almost invariably succeeds, for a Burmese woman is one of the most charming, attractive, and altogether lovable creatures on this earth.

Burmese baby girls have not the dignity and fine deportment of the children of most Eastern countries; but even the poorest Burmese girl-child has a grace and charm of manner and voice such as one seldom meets with; she is a gentle, lovable little soul, tactful, self-controlled, and desirable, destined to make the most perfect little wife and mother in all the glorious Orient.

THE RED JACKET

BURMAH



A FIND

BURMAH

JAPANESE CHILDREN

LITTLE MOTHER

JAPAN

JAPANESE CHILDREN

THE Japanese boy makes his entry into this vale of tears to the sound of glad triumphal music. No sorrowful world does it seem to him, but a goodly place, full of joy and pleasant things. Smiling faces surround him; softest silks enfold him; and the sound of clinking saki-cups and gentle voices greet his baby ears. Pretty ladies bring all sorts of presents and lay them on his bed. He doesn't quite understand the use of these things; but he graciously gurgles and coos his pleasure at the sight of so much bright colour. He does rather resent being passed from hand to hand all round the room, and being fondled and fussed over—it seems so foolish and undignified. Still, he is a calm, phlegmatic personage, not easily ruffled, and he bears it all with remarkable equanimity. If people must behave in a ridiculous manner, surely it is not his fault? Baby's

mother sits on a mat all day and receives his presents—toys, pieces of crêpe for dresses, dried fish and eggs for good luck,—executing dozens of bows per hour, and dispensing dozens of cups of tea. She sits and discusses with her friends what dresses baby is to wear, for great care must be taken with these miniature dresses. They must be exquisite works of art in rainbow-coloured silks, and are often very costly: indeed, a dress for a Japanese baby costs more than would provide wardrobes for all the children in an ordinary European household.

At last the day comes when he is to wear this costly garment. Such a fuss! His friends take a holiday and escort him on his first visit to the temple, where he is placed under the direction of a patron god, to whom offerings are made. Back they all go to the house again, and drink saki and tea, and eat all sorts of delicacies, until far into the night.

After this excitement, things are perhaps rather dull by contrast, and baby, although he is still the hero of the hour, leads a somewhat quiet life.

But not for long. Soon he is strapped on to the back of an elder sister or a brother aged four, and the fun begins—unending fun, rollicking fun,

OUT SHOPPING

JAPAN

from dawn to sunset. His is a public life. He is to be seen during all sorts of weather. If it is cold he is covered by his sister's coat, and if it is hot by her parasol; he eats in public, he plays in public; he takes his baths, with the temperature at a hundred and three, placidly and in public. He exhibits an intense interest in the games his sister is playing. She seems quite unconscious of his existence: she bounds and leaps about after her ball or shuttlecock, while baby's round black head whirls and bobs, until one thinks that it must soon be jerked off his body. But he is quite happy. He clings to her back like a young monkey; and he learns from this awkward position to bow to you, and to behave with perfect propriety and grace.

Soon he begins to walk alone, to roll about on the soft padded floor of his house, and to walk and run and jump about the streets on high wooden clogs. Talking is not at all a difficult matter to him, for the Japanese language is so soft and easy that even babies chatter volubly.

If baby is a boy, when he is quite young he wears red, yellow, and white, which, as he grows older, soon give place to more sober hues. When he has arrived at the age of three he begins to wear an obi, and the putting on of this garment

is always celebrated by a feast. It is also an event of some joy to the boy himself. Does not an obi mean pockets?

A Japanese boy gets the best of it in more than one way. His sister looks up to him as her young lord and master. Even though he be younger than herself, she must give way to him in every detail. If he is sad, her one care must be to make him happy; and her ambition is to imitate as nearly as possible the behaviour of her mother towards her own lord and master. The baby boy places his foot upon his sister's neck, and she is thenceforth his slave. He loves animals, this small boy,—pet rabbits and cats, queer cats and rabbits, unlike our English ones, with white fur, and black and yellow spots, and no tails. How a British baby would stare! Wherever the Japanese boy goes he carries about with him a bamboo pole, with which he leaps and vaults, and even walks, so clever is he. He goes to school every day, and learns to write, but with a brush. He used to sit down happily on a padded mat with his heels tucked under him; but now he has to sit at an uncomfortable desk, and how glad he is to leave it and go home! His chief interest is centred in fighting, glory, and pageantry, flags,

HIS FIRST UMBRELLA

JAPAN

drums, and toy weapons. A warlike person is he. And then he loves flying kites, great, gorgeously painted, floating things,—red kites, yellow kites, kites in the shape of fish, butterflies, and dragons. He loves to try and saw through another boy's kite-string. No one is too young or too old to play at kite-flying in Japan, and nothing is prettier than to see hundreds of upturned flower-like faces mingling with the yellow, wrinkled visages of old men, all equally happy in a game in which age plays no part.

Courage is the most important thing insisted on in a Japanese boy's character, and all sorts of games are played to test the character of the children. On winter evenings the boys sit round the hibachi, and a servant or some aged person tells them thrilling stories of dragons and giants, and ghosts and goblins, and everything that is most creepy and blood-curdling. Then, when they have been worked up to a sufficient state of terror, each boy must go into a darkened room, where strands of wick burn in a dish of oil, remove one strand and come out again. The room grows darker and darker, and the last unfortunate boy is supposed to see some terrible demon. But he must come out with a calm smiling face,

absolutely unruffled. Another favourite game, equally eerie, is to gather together in a graveyard, under a lonely tree, and plant flags in a haunted spot. Then hair-raising stories must be told; after which each boy walks up the avenue alone, and pulls out a flag slowly, with dignity and without a nervous tremor.

The great day of the year for Japanese boys is the fifth day of the fifth month, when a festival called the Feast of Flags is celebrated. Over every house where a boy lives, on that day a noble paper carp floats proudly out to meet the breeze, ducking and curtseying in the wind: it is supposed to typify the young man overcoming all obstacles in his future life. On that day every shop is bright with toys, effigies, and heroes, warriors, generals, commanders, soldiers on foot and soldiers on horseback, genii of strength and valour, wrestlers, and all kinds of beautiful things so dear to childish hearts.

Then, there is the baby who lives in the humble Japanese shop. All day long he sits on a mat of primrose-coloured straw, and looks through the tiny shop front, hung over with dark-blue canvas and ornamented with cabalistic signs. Perhaps his father is a keysmith, and nothing amuses baby more

than to look at that beautiful brass-bound cabinet containing father's tools, with so many delightful little doors, that spring open in all sorts of unexpected places. He himself, however small he may be, is busily employed. Perhaps he is painting Japanese lanterns and umbrellas, or employed with tiny hammers clipping little pieces of silver and brass for cloisonné vases, filling in the enamel, firing it in the charcoal forge, and polishing, polishing ever so diligently. What amusements there are for a baby in the streets of Japan! Such lovely starch cakes, sugared beans, and sweetened peas, to buy so cheaply! Then, there are the fire-eating man to watch, and the clever fellow who trains bugs and beetles to draw paper carts about, funny men who go about the streets with masks on to make the children laugh, and such toys and kites and whips and tops to buy!

There is also the boy trained to become a fireman: he must learn to swarm up fragile ladders made of bamboo, and perform acrobatic feats at the top with pails of water. Some boys take up the life of wrestlers, and learn to crouch as cats do, to spring from the sanded floor high into the air, to catch other boys round their throats, and to play all sorts of ingenious antics.

The boys love to smoke. How nonchalantly a child of three holds a cigarette between his lips with that peculiarly introspective look of the old hand, as he both tests the excellence of the tobacco and gives himself up to its enjoyment! How polite he is, this child! If you give him a present he will call on you at your hotel with a little offering in return, bowing low to you with all the grace imaginable.

He reverences his elders. You will see a frail blossom of a child leading by the hand an old wrinkled man—guiding him gently and patiently over the hard places.

See a boy painting sand pictures by the roadside in Japan, and say that he is not an artist if you can! He seems to have an instinctive knowledge of drawing as he sits there in the playground of some ancient temple, drawing his pictures with three little bags of sand. How rapidly he spreads the white sand out to represent his paper, and how skilfully, with chubby fingers, does he outline figures of men and animals formed out of his own baby imagination, tastefully filling in the colours, red, blue, and yellow!

A Japanese mother takes pains to develop the artistic propensities in her child, not by long

REFLEXIONS

JAPAN

dreary lessons and visits to picture galleries, but by taking him out to see the cherry blossom in full bloom, teaching him to appreciate the beauties of nature. His parents educate him to draw from memory. You will often see a child sitting in a garden in Japan gazing attentively for perhaps a whole hour at a bowl of gold-fish, watching the bright creatures as they circle round and round in the bowl. Remarking on some particular pose, the child will retain it in his busy brain, and, running away, will put down this impression as nearly as he can remember. Perhaps on this first occasion he is only able to put in a few leading lines; very soon he is at a loss—he has forgotten the curve of the tail, or the placing of the eye. He toddles back, and studies the fish again and again, until, perhaps after one week's practice, that child is able to draw the fish in two or three different poses from memory, without the slightest hesitation or uncertainty.

There are boys who learn to embroider, very different from the metal-work boys, with their merry clanging of hammers. They are sad and silent, working with heads bent down, picking up thread after thread of the piece of embroidery that they have been working on for

months, with never a word or a smile. Soon those bright black eyes will grow dim and red, and eventually lose their sight.

There are the dyer boys. Also there are the stencil workers, who have a fascinating trade. They cut fantastic designs from the hard polished cardboard beneath their instruments, designs as delicate as the tracery of a spider's web.

Very clever carpenters they make, these boys, working with saws as thin as tissue-paper, with their teeth set the wrong way; tiny chisels that almost break as they handle them, dolls'-house planes, and hammers the size of a lady's hatpin.

Very clean and dainty are the workers in lacquer; and the cloisonné workers, with their tiny instruments and microscopic gold wire.

How clever a boy is at pulling out a tooth with his fingers! You see him practising at pulling things out of a board, beginning with tin tacks and ending with nails.

A baby Japanese girl is the most delightful creature you can possibly imagine: a radiant, happy, beautiful butterfly. She is rarely known to cry, for she is rarely slapped. What mother could have the heart to touch so dainty a blossom as the child-flower of this land of flowers? The

THE FLOWER OF THE FAMILY

JAPAN

baby girl loves fun; she loves toys, sweets, and tea in little cups; she loves to smoke, with a funny pipe made of brass and kept in her sleeve; and, above all, she loves her big round-headed doll. She is wonderfully playful and gentle, this child, always ideally dressed, and always self-possessed. She has the loveliest mouth and teeth and twinkling black eyes; and she knows it, too. The smallest Japanese wants to be beautiful: each baby girl has her dainty lacquer box of rouge and powder: she is like some wonderful fantastic tropical blossom, some dear little dragon-fly. And her hair—how black it is, with blue lights, and shining where it is stiffened and gummed in loops and bands till it seems to reflect the gold lacquer and coral-tipped pins that bristle round her head! Great competition goes on between girls as to whose hair shall be most becomingly arranged, whose the smoothest and most glossy, whose girdle shall be the most gracefully tied, and whose dress shall possess the most harmonious effects.

A great deal of time is spent sitting in front of their metal mirrors, pomading their hair and moulding it into wonderful shapes. Fine fun it is to take one's food in a dainty box tied up with a big red cord and tassel, and go picnicking under

the shade of some noble forest tree, twisted and gnarled and bowed with age; or under patriarchal plum-trees, white as with snowflakes; or to the iris gardens, and lunch in a dainty tea-house among the great beds of royal purple flowers, turning back their petals and glowing in every shade to the full warm rays of the sun. This is joy indeed! Then, to sit there as the evening comes on and the sunlight fades, watching the purple blossoms lose their richness and grow shadowy, and the white ones take on an icy purity unearthly in its transparency, and shining as with an internal light! Still a little later, with the last rays of daylight, all the darker flowers disappear and the ghostly heads of the pure white petals loom like phantoms in the purple dusk.

How beautiful it is to watch the festoons of lanterns being lit one by one! Then comes the real fun: it is the time for hunting fireflies, and catching them in little green gauze cages,—bright elusive fireflies, gleaming like golden patches in the cool night.

A baby girl finds her life an extremely bright and happy one, though hedged about with proprieties; and from babyhood to old age she must always be under the control of the stronger sex.

LIVING JEWELS

JAPAN

The science of deportment occupies quite half her time. She is taught how to walk, how to kneel, and how to get up again, without disarranging a single fold of her kimono. She must know the correct way to wait upon people, how to carry a tray and how to present it gracefully, while the dainty handing of a cup to a guest is of the greatest importance imaginable. A man can always tell the character of a girl by the way she offers him a cup of saki. The little girl is soon taught to control her feelings: if she is sad, never to cry; if she is happy, to laugh quietly, never in a boisterous manner,—that would be considered vulgar in the extreme. Her greatest happiness lies in the perfect acquisition of self-control, and in the power to assume a cheerful smile and agreeable manner amid the most distressing circumstances. She is the object of much care and solicitude, this baby; but she has much to learn. She must learn to forget herself entirely, to be neither forward nor shy, nor self-conscious; yet she must not lack *savoir faire*—she must combine childish simplicity with womanly consideration. There is a certain simplicity and quaint formality in her bringing up; but her artistic training is perfect. Japan is the

land of ceremony. Children are trained to a certain strictness of propriety unknown in the less ceremonious West, and their utter naturalness and absolute freedom from seeking after effect produces in them a simplicity of manner which helps to make them the most delightful of their kind. The Japanese baby girl is the product of perfect civilisation.

On the last night of the Old Year each little girl has a ship of twisted straw placed on her pillow, laden with grain, bits of green stuff, and little ornaments: this is to bring her good luck. In the morning she is dressed in her best and brightest clothes; and she finds (but it is no surprise to her) that the doorway of her house is tied over with a grass rope to keep out the evil spirits, and that over the top is a green arch of pine and bamboo and a group of lobsters.

What fun there is on New Year's Day, and for weeks after! During that time the children wear their prettiest clothes and do whatever they choose; presents and visits are exchanged; the house overflows with good things. All day long the little girls play about in the streets with battledores and shuttlecocks and pretty paper balls, singing a little nursery rhyme about a

ONE OF OUR NEW ALLIES

JAPAN

beautiful lady who was drowned, while their parents sit on the roof and watch them. At night they gather round the fire and listen to the drowsy voice of some old grandmother or nurse, who carries them away in imagination to wonderful fairy palaces, to the homes of the sea gods, and to caves where terrible monsters dwell. But the greatest fun of all for little girls is the Feast of Dollies. Then children's parties are to be given all over Japan, and invitations are sent out stamped with the young lady's own beautiful red seal. The small hostess stands at the door and receives her guests, bowing low to each. Refreshments are eaten, and then the fun begins. All the old dolls are brought up out of fireproof warehouses—ancient daimios, archers dressed in gorgeous apparel, big dolls, little dolls, baby dolls, grown-up dolls,—and all are received with equal joy. Then, there are the appliances for the dolls' comfort, in perfect imitation of grown-up folks. There are chairs for them to sit on, pipes for them to smoke, dressing-tables with cosmetics, and everything to meet a lady's requirements. And, best of all, there are real little kitchens, in which children can cook the meals for their dolls—real meals, no make-believe. What laughter there is,

what a chattering of tongues and clattering of plates! Truly it is a joyous day. Then, there are several flower festivities, when the children visit the famous gardens of plum and cherry blossom, chrysanthemum, iris, and azalea, and the temples of the dead Shoguns, gleaming with scarlet and gold and rich carvings. They catch the tortoises and gold-fish in the lotus lake, and pick the scarlet lilies; but they do not take them home—that would be very unlucky. There are visits to gardens with little summer-houses and miniature lakes, tiny bridges indescribably quaint, full-grown trees, small stepping-stones, ponds of gold-fish—all representing an appearance of vastness, yet in reality occupying an area the size of a small room,—and visits to the theatre, where the children sit all day in little railed-off boxes with the whole family, listening to historical plays. There is a moral to be learnt from everything in Japan, and at the theatres a small girl is embued with the spirit of passionate loyalty: she sees what an ideal Japanese woman should be, and she becomes animated with the noble spirit of her ancestors.

I remember passing a temple, an ancient Shinto temple called "Kamogamo"; it was a sacred temple and very popular, being much

frequented for picnics. On this particular day one of the two important picnics or festivals of the year was going on; the great ground of the temple and the playground were inclosed about with straw ropes on bamboo poles, to separate one from another. It was a festival for girls under ten, and there were hundreds of children, all with their kimonos tucked up, showing their scarlet petticoats, and looking for all the world like a mass of poppies. The scarlet in the petticoats was repeated in neck and hair; but their kimonos varied much, and were of almost every shade and texture of Japanese cloth and silk crêpe. There were luminous greens, fawns, stripes, golden browns shading into lemon yellows, harmonies in brown and violet, and dresses striped and chequered in tones of almost every conceivable value. Two rows or armies of these girls were placed several yards distant from one another in this emerald-green field; and in the space between them stood two servants, each holding a long bamboo pole, fresh and green, being evidently only just cut down for the fair; and suspended from its top was a flat shallow drum covered with tissue paper. Ere long two young men, teachers, appeared on

the scene, carrying baskets of small many-coloured balls, which they threw down on the grass between the children and the drums. Then a signal was given, and all the girls started running down the field at full speed towards one another, pouncing on the balls as they ran, and throwing them with all their force up at the paper drums. The great majority of them missed their aim altogether, and the balls flew either above or below the drums, some of the mites getting so excited that they threw them forty or fifty feet up. After a time, when a perfect shower of balls had passed through the tissue drums, quite demolishing them, a shower of coloured papers, miniature lanterns, paper umbrellas and flags, came slowly fluttering down among the children, on to their jet-black bobbing heads and into their eager outstretched hands. Never have I seen anything more beautiful than these gay, brightly-coloured people, packed closely together like a cluster of flowers in the brilliant sparkling sunshine, with their pretty upturned faces watching the softly-falling rain of coloured toys. I strolled through the temple grounds, past this brilliant stream of colour and lovely laughing children, past the cherry-trees and dainty tea-houses; and in a few

minutes found myself in a cool grey-green forest of bamboo, an academic bamboo grove, looking like a pillared temple, sunless and silent. It was here that the philosophers of old taught and meditated, and it seemed a place to meditate in — so quiet, so sombre, shut off from the world, with its endless lofty pillars of grey luminous green,—silent, a world apart.

At the age of nineteen the Japanese girl is pure, sweet, and delightfully self-controlled and attractive, prepared when the time comes to make an admirable wife and mistress of a household. She is no longer gay, no longer brilliantly dressed: with her childhood the happiest years of her life have ended. Starting life as a butterfly child, gay and brilliant, she becomes sadder and sadder with every passing year: the colours fade and become dull, until by the time she is a full-grown woman they have sobered down to almost Quaker hues, except here and there where some edging of colour shows itself.

Directly she is a wife, her one ambition is to become old: it is almost a craze with her. She shows it in every possible way — in the way she ties her obi, the fashion in which she dresses her hair; everything that suggests the advance of

the sere and yellow leaf she eagerly adopts. When her husband gives a party, he calls in the geisha: she herself, poor dear, sits upstairs on a mat and is not allowed to be seen. She is called the "honoured interior," and is far too precious and refined to figure in public life. But, although to our eyes she may appear a nonentity compared with the geisha, her position is in reality a very happy one, and greatly to be envied. What if the geisha entertains her husband's guests? The wife's is the greater privilege of attending upon him when he returns, tired out, from the festivities. She is a rare jewel set in the background of her home, and the "honoured interior" is perfectly content.

CHINESE CHILDREN

A CHINESE GIRL

CHINA

CHINESE CHILDREN

THE life of a Chinese child—what a queer, half-sad, half-joyous life it is! Sometimes baby comes into the world a welcome guest; at others he is most unwelcome. Even if a baby is not wanted he has not time to suffer much: soon, very soon, the tiny life is crushed and over. Once in Hong Kong harbour I saw a dead baby float by our steamer. It did not look disfigured—it looked more like a large papier-maché doll fast asleep—as it glided silently past the vessel. If a Chinese baby in a rich family does happen to be wanted, and more especially if he be a boy, it is quite a different matter. His welcome is warm indeed. The mother's chief aim is that her child's first impressions should be those of joy. Everything possible is done to make his life one long dream of gladness; and it is considered a great breach of manners, a deplorable want of consideration, to display sorrow

of any kind before a child. Almost directly it is born the mother begins to protect it from evil spirits by hanging it over with charms—little pieces of stone tied on by string, scraps of holy writing, darning-needles, and all sorts of trinkets,—until the baby resembles a miniature Christmas tree.

The boys in China are thought more of than the girls; and from the earliest possible age the baby boy is taught to place his tiny foot upon the neck of the household, his mother included, and rule despotically. He soon begins to learn his power; his mother is the most devoted slave of all. One reason is that the boys are the mainstays of the family. A girl when she gets married has nothing more to do with her own people, not even grieving or putting on mourning for them when they die; whereas a boy if he is married brings his wife home to the paternal mansion, and keeps his mother and his grandmother, and their graves after them. A boy is especially welcome to his father because, directly he is able to understand anything at all, he is taught to pray for father's seat in heaven, and will be a perpetual worshipper when father is dead. He is also welcome to his mother; because she feels that now she is considered a person of authority, and has, through her son, some position in the house-

LITTLE FATTY

CHINA

hold, where until now she has been looked upon more or less as a nonentity.

About one month after the child is born a festival is given; his head is shaven, and a suitable name chosen for him. Sometimes a mother is seized with the dreadful idea that her child is not a human being at all, but only a spirit come on earth in disguise for the express purpose of tormenting her. If this is the case, then she will endow it with the most material names possible in order to bind it to this earth. For instance, Miss Fowlrun-with-the-wire-netting would be ashamed to spread her wings and fly to the home of her forefathers. Such an act would be incongruous and intolerant. Mother is continually occupied with trying to deceive these evil spirits; and if there is only one boy in the family, and several girls, she will cunningly change their clothing and their mode of dress, putting the girl's dress on the boy and the boy's on the girl, so that if the spirits do come they may take one of the girls by mistake.

At the christening of the child, or the festival, each friend is expected to bring a piece of stuff, large or small, according to the separate means; the pieces are afterwards sewn together and formed

into a garment. Naturally it is of a somewhat variegated appearance, almost like a patchwork quilt, but very gay and bright in colour as befits a child.

The Chinese baby has an adventurous life. It is strapped to its mother's back all day long, and wherever she goes the child must, of course, follow. All the day, through her household duties, while making the dinner, sweeping, washing clothes on the river bank, there goes the glossy little black head bobbing and whirling at such a rate that one cannot imagine how it can possibly manage to live through the day. Once I saw a woman tumble into the water with the baby. She sank to the bottom, and on rising was fished out and laid on the river bank with the baby still attached to her back, inscrutable and contented as ever.

Chinese children are precocious; and, as their fathers and elder brothers are gamblers, they must needs gamble too. In their games they gamble desperately, and early in the morning you will see a little child, who in England would not be allowed to walk alone, toddling down the street to gamble for his breakfast. He will go up to one of the many stalls, the moving cooking places that line the streets of Chinese cities, and warily put down one "cash" on the counter. The

HOW GOOD

CHINA

man hands him a bag full of numbers, he puts in his hand and draws out—a blank. The tiny countenance falls; but in goes the hand again, and this time draws out perhaps "one basin of rice." He eats this, and gambles away the rest of his money in the same way. On the whole, he would probably not have nearly as much to eat as if he had traded in a straightforward manner. Sometimes poor baby goes without breakfast at all. Still, the glamour of the thing, the manliness of it, is to him worth all the breakfasts in the world. Gambling is a passion in China. I once accompanied a body of police into a house, in the European quarter, whose occupants were known to gamble all day long. When the door was opened we found only stolid Chinamen solemnly smoking. The room was searched for dice and cards; but nothing was discovered save a brass pot for a charcoal fire in one corner of the room. These men had been gambling for all they were worth.

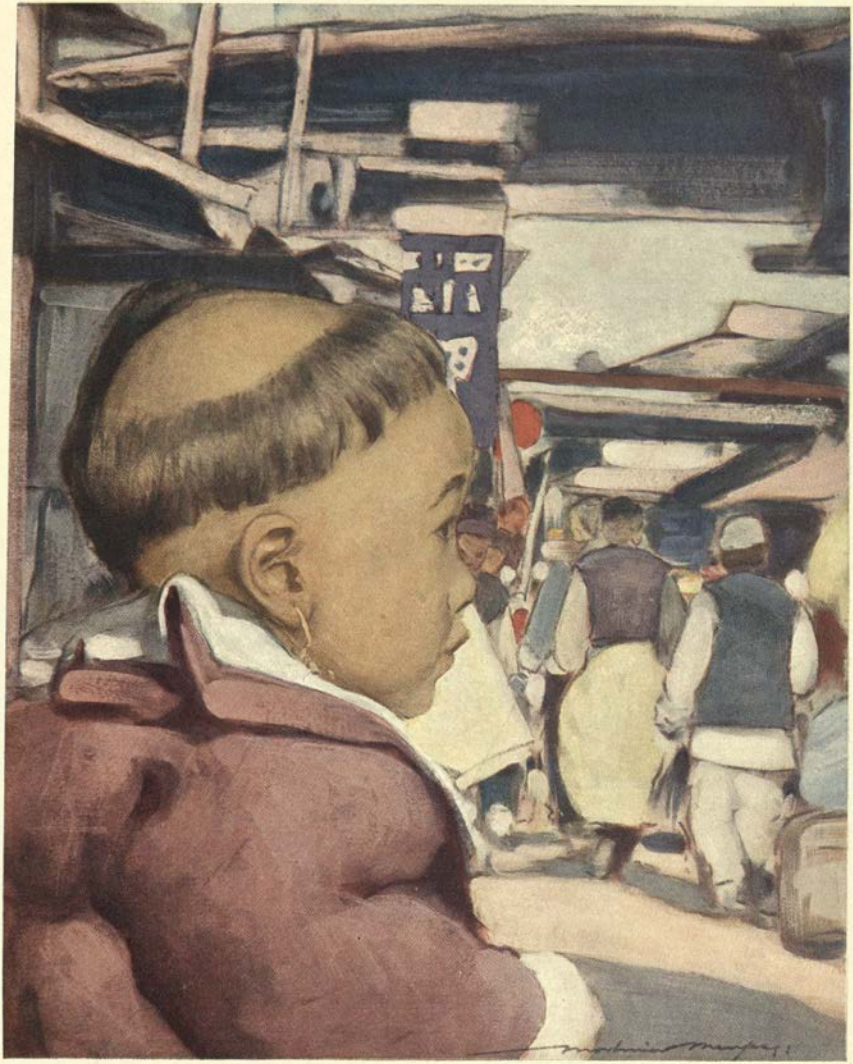
The games of Chinese children are many and ingenious; but perhaps the prettiest of all is battledore and shuttlecock, the little ones battling the shuttle to one another with the soles of their feet, sending the gaily feathered missile flying in all directions with great force and rapidity. To see

them at school, and to hear them, is a scene never to be forgotten. Hundreds of children stand up all together and shout out shrilly lessons which they have learnt by heart. How their masters ever manage to distinguish the voices is a marvel. The proportion of girls who learn to read is very small. It is believed that the child's mind does not begin to open out for some time, and that seven or eight is quite soon enough to begin to teach them. At thirteen or fourteen they are supposed to begin to understand the meaning of things, and argue for themselves.

Chinese mothers are not very clean with their children, and the washings are few and far between. They never use soap. Sometimes they use oil; but more often it is a good dry rub to which the babies are treated. A great deal of this comes about, I fancy, from the coldness of the climate. It never occurs to them to use warm water; besides, they imagine that this would cause the little one to grow up weak and sickly. Many children are never washed at all; and their only chance of becoming clean is when it rains or when they are impelled to wade across a river, —which is rather precarious, for a Chinese child would rather walk a mile than take a bath.

A CANTON BABY

CHINA



The chief fear of the mother, as has been mentioned, is that her child is going to be stolen by evil spirits, and when it is ill she has recourse to stratagems by which to bind it to this earth. She will squeeze it into a goldfish bowl and keep it there for days, imagining that, as the fish are unable to get out, neither will the child; for the same reason, she will wrap it round with fishing-nets; padlocks also are frequently used. She firmly believes that the child has not one soul, but three souls. When it is ill she takes it for granted that one of these must be missing. Accordingly, she sets out at midnight carrying with her some bright little trinket belonging to the child, and a lantern, and walks about the streets of the city calling and coaxing the spirit to come back, for a mother's voice is considered most effectual in recalling the rebellious soul. Almost invariably the poor woman goes back home quite comforted and assured that the spirit has answered and is coming with her. If, after all, the child should die, all her love turns to bitter hatred, and the small body is invested in her mind with all that is horrible and repugnant. How can one love an evil spirit, a servant of the devil, who all this time has stayed on earth in the person of a

child, on purpose to torment and bring misery to her? She feels that its very presence is contaminating; and, in her fear lest it might be born by mistake into that family again, the child that she has so worshipped in life, when its vitality has scarcely left the tiny frame, she will beat black and blue, painting its face and maiming its limbs into all kinds of horrible disfigurements, and then thrust it outside the door, where it will probably be picked up, rolled in a straw mat, and laid on the grave of some grown-up person in the burial-ground. Thus end the lives of many hundreds of China's children. In their utter ignorance and superstition they believe that these things are just and right. What can one do to dissuade them from centuries of habit?

A BARGEE GIRL

CHINA

THE CELESTIAL TWINS

CHINA

MEXICAN CHILDREN

AT PUEBLA

MEXICO

MEXICAN CHILDREN

THEY are sad people, the children of Mexico; yet proud and dignified to the last degree. Even babies, toddling stolidly and independently about among the gorgeous tropical flowers, racing after big butterflies, or demanding money from you as they stand in the hot sunshine, clothed only in their brown skins,—even they have a certain haughtiness of demeanour and grace of carriage quite unequalled by any other children I have known. They seem to feel that they belong to a proud, indomitable race apart from other races; and even the poorest and most ragged Mexican child walks the streets of his native city with an air of conscious superiority that tells of his Aztec ancestors. Children in Mexico are taught to be pleasant and courteous to all persons, however lowly their stations: although a child is seldom scolded, any discourtesy or omission of the polite

forms of speech is rigorously punished. Whenever a child sees his father he must rush forward to greet him, and I have seen grown-up men kiss their fathers' hands in the open streets. Children are taught to bow submissively before a visitor, to offer as a present anything that a visitor may admire, although if you took them at their word you would probably have a bullet put through your head. But however little all this courtesy really means, it is pretty to see a Mexican boy bowing to a little girl of his own age, and even to a comrade, with the greatest dignity, asking after the health of the parents with all the grace of the highest in the land. Unfortunately, one cannot live on dignity alone, and these little children, for all the luscious fruit that grows on every hedge and tree in Mexico, are often very hungry.

Clothing is at best quite an unnecessary article in a tropical climate, and consequently is not missed by them; but food, more's the pity, is essential, and the children of Mexico, in order not to starve, must needs earn their own living by the sweat of their own brows. Even their christening gifts, instead of being comparatively useless mugs and spoons, are invariably articles which can be used in after-life, such as bows and arrows, spinning-wheels,

MEXICAN GIRL

MEXICO

spades, and canoes. Baby has a few short months of freedom and indolence, when he is allowed to tumble about at will among the flowers, making playmates of harmless snakes and grasshoppers to his heart's content; but soon he must turn both hand and brain to serious work. He must either support himself or go to bed hungry on many a night. This, I always think, must be the cause of that melancholy, precocious expression so often to be seen on the handsome faces of Mexican children.

Children swarm everywhere in Mexico, but most of all perhaps in the markets, where they are very energetic sellers. Dressed in their smartest holiday clothes, little girls stroll about the square with all the dignity and grace of young queens, carrying huge purple jars filled with water on their heads; and many a maiden of six, lovely of feature and lovely of form, is to be seen presiding authoritatively over large stalls of chillies, onions, sugar-cane, and nuts, driving a lively trade. She is dressed perhaps in pink with a bluish-grey shawl; such exquisite combination of colour being the order of the day even among the poorest people of Mexico. Hosts of boys encumber the square and make walking a difficulty with their pigs and

the strings attached to them; while others clutch at your dress and force you, with the appealing persuasion of their soft dark eyes and emaciated bodies, to buy a posy of jasmine from them.

The mule is the favourite friend and dearly beloved playmate of every Mexican child: for him a portion of the scantiest meal is always saved, and he returns the affection with all the devotion of his faithful nature. He it is who romps with the children, and allows himself to be dressed up and made a puppet of, uncomplainingly, from early morning until they fall asleep with their heads resting on his steadfast back at night; he it is who carries the entire family for miles and miles into the nearest market.

No words can describe the poverty of a Mexican family: it is indeed very terrible. Children are left more or less to the tender mercies of Providence. They sleep on the earthen floor of the family mud hut; they wear scarcely any clothes; and food is distinctly a luxury. Dreams and fancies are the richest possessions of a Mexican boy. And how happy he is in imagination! What clothes he wears when he goes to the fair—a great sombrero, larger than a cartwheel, trousers of goatskin, and a pair of boots! What sweets he buys there, and

A MEXICAN BOY

MEXICO

toys! What more can a boy want to live on than vivid imagination, even if he does have to dine on a crust? If one happened to arrive in Mexico on the twenty-fourth of June, one would be greatly struck by the cleanliness of the people, by their neatly groomed and greased heads, by the newness of their clothing, and by the general air of prosperity and jollity pervading the whole country. "What is this I have heard of the poverty and degradation of the Mexican people?" one would naturally say. "How false was my information!" On the other hand, if one were to arrive on the twenty-third of June, one would be shocked and surprised with the extreme filthiness and poverty to be seen everywhere. Then all the world would appear to be taking a bath: the river would be filled with people bathing, and the banks strewn with terrible discarded rags. One would see young girls cutting their luxuriant black hair. "Truly," one would say, "this is a strange country." But such a transformation of natural conditions only happens once a year, and I should advise all travellers to Mexico to time their visits so as to arrive there not before the twenty-fourth of June.

Occasionally, when a child is bathing in the river,

it becomes afflicted with the evil eye. If by chance you can detect the person who has cast the spell, you are at liberty to take him prisoner. It may almost be said that the people make their own laws; and although, as a rule, their manners are gentle and polite, yet, when once crossed, they show themselves to have a disposition very malignant. The first and most important thing to do when you arrive in a Zapateco village is to have yourself made a godfather or a godmother, as the case may be, to as many children as possible: then the fathers and mothers and uncles and aunts of the child—half the village are related—immediately set themselves up as your protectors through life. It is their particular business henceforth to see that you come to no harm. A Zapateco village is not the safest place in the world; but with scores of relations ready to lay down their lives cheerfully for your sake, you feel as secure as with a body-guard of soldiers.

One curious custom of the Mexicans is that whenever a child develops smallpox all the rest of the children in the family are made to go to bed with it, so that they also may catch the disease, and be treated for it in its early and less dangerous stage.

GETTING WATER

MEXICO

Zapateco children appear to be the same dignified, graceful beings that they were thousands of years ago. There has been no mixing with the Spaniards: the Zapatecoes are a pure race, contemporary with the Aztecs. One recognises them from the pictures one has seen of the antique Egyptians; and the sight of a group of Zapateco children always makes me think that, after all, there must be some truth in the theory of the great continent Atalanta. The Zapateco games are extraordinarily antique: they are the games of the early Egyptians. And then the children you see on the sea-shore among the grown-up people are dyeing cottons into stuffs with a dye that is of precisely the same quality as the old Tyrian dyes. We have games that one is accustomed to consider comparatively modern, as, for instance, lawn tennis; but the Zapatecoes have a game thousands of years old, which is astonishingly similar to our up-to-date tennis, even in the method of scoring.

There are many games in Mexico, for old and for young; but one of the most popular, and at the same time most cruel, is chicken-fighting.

At Christmas time there is always a play, in

which only children take part, dealing with the childhood of Christ,—rather a pretty idea when so very reverently treated.

Mexican children are all more or less artists, partly because of their own instinctive and hereditary taste for art, and partly because of their picture-writing, which accustoms them to design at a very early age. They are exceedingly swift runners and good musicians, these baby Mexicans, while their claims to beauty of face and form are, of course, acknowledged all the world over.

A baby in Mexico is taught to fear nothing on earth or in heaven, and to overcome all difficulties. Very early in life he is plunged into the nearest roadside bath, and made to struggle to land unaided. The children all work, and you will often see a little fellow staggering after his father on the way to the fields with a bundle larger than himself, in which are probably that father's luncheon and appliances for work. Before a girl is more than five or six years of age she is made to prepare tortillas and meals for the family and to weave woollen shawls.

The burial of a child in Mexico is at once the most curious and most pathetic spectacle I have ever witnessed. Parents, though negligent, are

fond of their children; and, in order to drown their grief, the father, as soon as his child is dead, hastens out to buy mezcal, cigarettes, cards and dice, while the mother hires a brass band and a professional singer. All their friends are invited. The men sit outside drinking and smoking fiercely, and the father most boisterously of all. They laugh and shout and dance wild dances, the band meanwhile doing its best to drown their voices. This festival is kept up all night. Inside the house, on a raised platform, lies the dead child, dressed in bright green calico, a shirt-box, gaily decorated, forming its coffin. The women moan and wail, and the professional singer, in order to direct their thoughts from their own grief, sings of lovesick maidens and unrequited love, while the innocent cause of all this disturbance lies like a graven image in its gaudy shirt-box, calm and serene, surrounded by eighteen flickering candles, with a little spray of jasmine laid caressingly against the waxen ear. Next morning the coffin is carried off to the burial-ground on the shoulders of a single man. Children, waving boughs of trees, follow, with all the invited guests in their train. When the grave is reached the coffin is lowered, lime thrown in, and several

gravediggers jump on the earth to stamp it down. Only when the guests have departed and the wearying artificial ceremonials are over, the bereaved parents are at liberty to give way to their natural emotions; and very real and terrible they are. Nothing is more pathetic and heartrending than a graveyard scene in Mexico. Mexicans are one and all, even to the children, exceedingly faithful to their dead; and at any time of the day, when passing a graveyard, you will invariably see groups of black-robed figures lying prostrate and moaning over the graves, or a bevy of children tenderly laying bouquets of orange flowers, tuberoses, jasmine, and purple salvias on the last resting-place of a favourite little sister, black-winged vultures hovering overhead.

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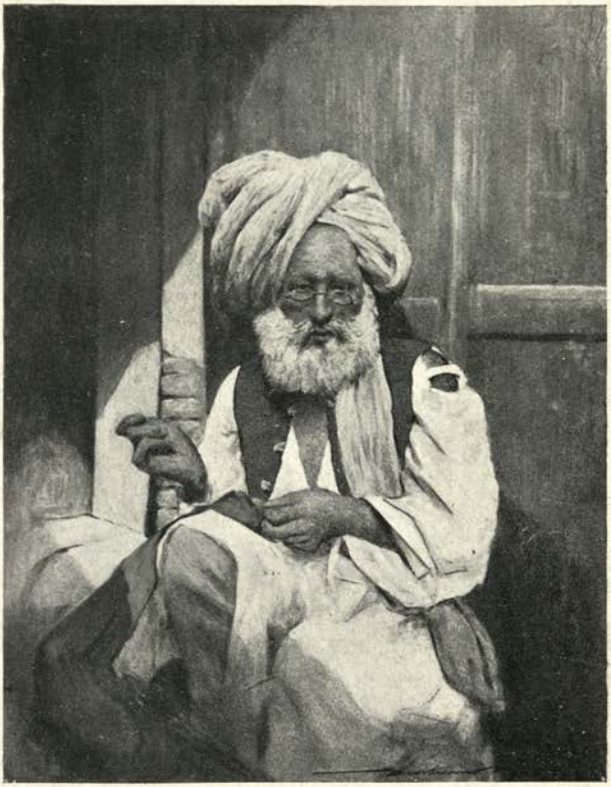

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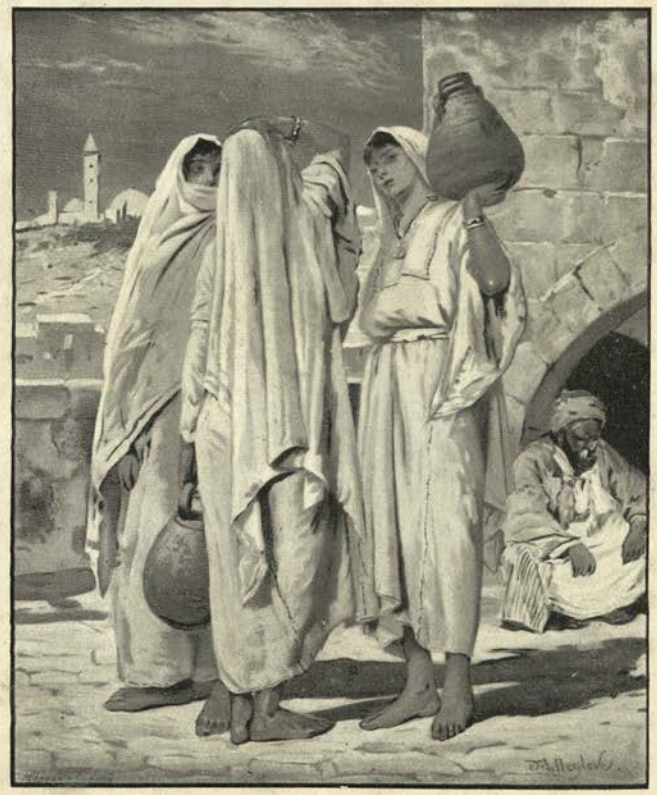

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